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THE SECOND BOOK OF SAMUEL

WITH MAP INTRODUCTION AND NOTES

BY THE

REV. A. F. KIRKPATRICK, B.D.

FELLOW OF TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE, AND REGIUS PROFESSOR OF HEBREW.

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*** The Text adopted in this Edition is that of Dr Scrivener's *Cambridge Paragraph Bible*. A few variations from the ordinary Text, chiefly in the spelling of certain words, and in the use of italics, will be noticed.

ABBREVIATIONS.

A.V.	The 'Authorised' Version of 1611.
R.V.	The Revised Version of 1885.
Heb.	The original Hebrew.
Sept. or LXX.	The Septuagint (see p. 5).
Targ.	The Targum (see p. 6).
Vulg.	The Vulgate (see p. 6).
Lit.	Literally.

INTRODUCTION.

I. THE BOOK OF SAMUEL.

1. *Titles and Division of the Books.* The two Books of Samuel, like the two Books of Kings, originally formed one book. The Septuagint translators, regarding the Book of Samuel and the Book of Kings as a complete History of the Kingdom from its foundation to its fall, divided the work into four books, which they styled *Books of the Kingdoms.* Jerome followed this division in the Vulgate, altering the name to *Books of the Kings*, which is retained as an alternative title in the Authorised Version.

2. *Meaning of the Title.* The title Samuel does not denote authorship, but like the titles Joshua, Ruth, and Esther, commemorates the prominent actor in the events recorded in the book. It stands as a monument of the greatness of the Prophet who was Jehovah's instrument for establishing the Kingdom of Israel, and guiding the chosen people through a crisis in its history second in importance only to the Exodus. The book begins with the account of his birth: and his direct influence extends to the close of it, in the reign of the king whom he anointed as Jehovah's choice.

The Second Book of Samuel must seem a strange title for a book of which not a line was written by Samuel, and in which his name is not once mentioned, unless we remember (1) that the division of the book into two parts is not original, (2) that Samuel's direct work really reaches all through the book.

3. *Who was the author of the Book of Samuel?* To this question no answer can be given. It is generally agreed that the book is *a compilation* from different sources, but who was the compiler there is no evidence to shew.

4. *What then were these sources?*

(*a*) *Histories written by the prophets of the time.* The Book of Chronicles expressly names as the original authority for the history of David's reign "the history of Samuel the seer, and

the history of Nathan the prophet, and the history of Gad the seer" (1 Chron. xxix. 29). Similar prophetic writings are referred to as authorities for the reigns of later kings. See 2 Chron. ix. 29, xii. 15, xiii. 22, xx. 34, xxvi. 22, xxxii. 32, xxxiii. 18, 19.

If then the Book of Samuel was compiled from the histories of Samuel, Nathan, and Gad, and other records preserved in the Schools of the Prophets, it rests upon the best possible authority. Samuel is the historian of his own lifetime, which included the greater part of Saul's reign: Nathan and Gad together give the history of David's reign. The events of David's life must have been familiarly known in the Schools of the Prophets at Ramah. It is expressly mentioned that when he fled from Saul he "came and told Samuel all that Saul had done to him, and he and Samuel went and dwelt in Naioth" (1 Sam. xix. 18), the college of prophets which Samuel had established at Ramah. The vivid account of David's friendship with Jonathan may be preserved almost in the very words in which he related his story to the prophets.

Gad was in communication with David during his outlaw life (1 Sam. xxii. 5); both Gad and Nathan appear to have occupied official positions in David's court (2 Sam. vii. 2 ff., xii. 25, xxiv. 11; 1 Kings i. 8 ff.; 2 Chron. xxix. 25), and both appear as his monitors in important crises of his life (2 Sam. xii. 1 ff., xxiv. 11 ff.).

To Nathan we may owe the full history of David's sin and repentance, together with the series of calamities by which it was punished, which occupies so large a portion of the Second Book: to Gad may be due the account of the Numbering of the People and its consequences.

(*b*) *The chronicles of king David* (1 Chron. xxvii. 24) may have supplied the formal summaries of wars in 2 Sam. viii. 1—15, and the lists of officials in 2 Sam. viii. 16—18, xx. 23—26, xxiii. 8—39.

(*c*) It is mentioned in 1 Sam. x. 25 that Samuel committed *the charter of the kingdom* to writing, and "laid it up before the LORD."

(*d*) From *the national poetic literature* were taken Hannah's song (1 Sam. ii. 1—10); David's lament for Saul and Jonathan (2 Sam. i. 17—27) preserved in the 'Book of Jashar'; David's lament for Abner (2 Sam. iii. 33, 34); David's thanksgiving (2 Sam. xxii=Ps. xviii); the last words of David (2 Sam. xxiii. 1—7). Whether these were preserved in writing or by oral tradition is uncertain.

(*e*) *Oral tradition* may have supplied some information.

5. *At what date was the compilation made?*

The language points to an early date. Some time however

had elapsed since the events narrated in the book occurred. The explanation of archaic terms (1 Sam. ix. 9) and reference to obsolete customs (2 Sam. xiii. 18), as well as the use of the formula "unto this day" (1 Sam. v. 5, vi. 18, xxvii. 6, xxx. 25; 2 Sam. iv. 3, vi. 8, xviii. 18) indicate this.

Probably the book was compiled soon after the Division of the Kingdoms.

6. *The Canonicity of the book* has never been questioned. Its acceptance in the Christian Church rests upon the fact that it formed a part of those Jewish Scriptures, which were received by our Lord and His Apostles. Our Lord appealed to one of the narratives contained in it as teaching the great principle that the ceremonial law must give way to the law of mercy (Matt. xii. 3, 4; Mk. ii. 25, 26; Lk. vi. 3, 4): the Magnificat shews evident familiarity with the Song of Hannah: St Peter, St Stephen, and St Paul refer to the history contained in it (Acts iii. 24, vii. 46, xiii. 20—22).

7. *The historical accuracy* of the book is remarkably borne out by the internal evidence. The forcible simplicity and grace of the narrative; the vividness with which the actors in the various events stand out before us; the minuteness of detail with regard to time and circumstance; the accurate descriptions of places (remarkably illustrated by the recent surveys of Palestine); all agree to confirm the conclusion arrived at in § 4, that much of the work is derived from the testimony of eyewitnesses and contemporaries.

8. *The Text of the book.* None of our manuscripts of the *original Hebrew text* are older than the 10th or possibly the 9th century A.D. But beside these manuscripts we have the ancient *Versions*, or translations into various languages. The most important of these are the Greek Version, called the *Septuagint* (abbreviated as Sept. or LXX); the 'Chaldee' or Aramaic Version, called the *Targum* (Targ.); the Latin Version, called the *Vulgate* (Vulg.). The Sept. frequently represents readings which remove difficulties in the Hebrew text, and have every appearance of being the correct readings. This is also the case, though to a much less extent, with the other Versions. Accordingly the variations of the Sept. and other Versions are noticed in the margin of the Revised Version, when they throw light upon obscure passages.

To some readers it may seem rash to doubt the integrity of the Hebrew text. But the Sept. is really the oldest evidence we possess for the text of the O.T.; and the fact that it was used by the Evangelists and Apostles gives it a special interest.

The Septuagint Version was made at Alexandria during the third and second centuries B.C. It is called the Septuagint, or Version of the *Seventy*, because it was long supposed to have

been made by 70 or 72 elders sent from Jerusalem for the purpose. But this story rests on no good authority.

The Targum (i.e. *interpretation* or *translation*) of Jonathan ben Uzziel is a translation into the Aramaic language, which superseded Hebrew in Palestine after the return from the Captivity. It was probably not reduced to writing before the middle of the fourth century A.D., though based on much earlier oral translations.

The Vulgate Latin Version was made by St Jerome (Hieronymus) directly from the Hebrew (A.D. 389—404). The Books of Samuel and Kings were the part first issued.

II. CONTENTS OF THE SECOND BOOK OF SAMUEL.

PART I. The Reign of David over Judah: i.—iv.

§ 1. *David's behaviour on hearing of Saul's death.* Tidings of Saul's death brought to David (i. 1—16): David's lamentation for Saul and Jonathan (i. 17—27).

§ 2. *The rival kingdoms.* David anointed king of Judah (ii. 1—4): his message to the men of Jabesh (ii. 5—7): Ish-bosheth made king of Israel by Abner (ii. 8—11).

The civil war. The combat at Gibeon (ii. 12—17): Asahel's death (ii. 18—23): the pursuit (ii. 24—31): Asahel's burial (ii. 32): progress of David's cause (iii. 1): his family (iii. 2—5).

§ 3. *Events leading to David's elevation to the throne of Israel.* Quarrel between Abner and Ish-bosheth (iii. 6—11): Abner's overtures to David; Michal restored (iii. 12—21): Abner murdered by Joab (iii. 22—27): David's indignation (iii. 28—30): his lamentation for Abner (iii. 31—39): murder of Ish-bosheth (iv. 1—7): execution of the murderers (iv. 8—12).

Note (*a*) David's generosity to enemies: (*b*) his patience, and willingness to wait God's time for his elevation: (*c*) continuous rise of David's power and declension of Saul's house: (*d*) disappointment of Abner's ambitious schemes.

PART II. The Reign of David over all Israel: v.—xxiv.

Division I. **Rise of David's Power: v.—ix.**

§ 1. *The Foundation of David's Kingdom at Jerusalem.* His election and anointing (v. 1—5): Jebus captured and made the capital (v. 6—10): alliance with Tyre (v. 11, 12): David's family (v. 13—16): Philistine opposition overcome (v. 17—25).

David's care for religion. Removal of the Ark from Kirjath-jearim (vi. 1—5): Uzzah's death (vi. 6—11): removal of the Ark to Jerusalem (vi. 12—19): Michal rebuked (vi. 20—23).

§ 2. *The Promise of Eternal Dominion to the house of David.* David's desire to build a temple (vii. 1—3): the Lord's answer (vii. 4—17): David's prayer and thanksgiving (vii. 18—29).

§ 3. *The Extension of David's Kingdom.* (*a*) Foreign conquests. Philistines and Moabites (viii. 1, 2): Zobah and Damascus (viii.

3—8): submission of Hamath (viii. 9—12): Edom (viii. 13, 14). (*b*) Internal administration. David's officers of state (viii. 15—18). (*c*) David's kindness to Mephibosheth (ix. 1—13).

Note (*a*) the silence of the narrative about details of conquest and national progress: (*b*) David's zeal for religion: (*c*) the almost unbroken prosperity of this period.

DIVISION II. **David's Fall and its Punishment: x.—xx.**

§ 1. *The preliminary circumstances.* David's ambassadors insulted by the Ammonites (x. 1—5). First campaign; defeat of the Ammonites and their Syrian allies (x. 6—14): second campaign; total defeat of the Syrians (x. 15—19): third campaign; siege of Rabbah (xi. 1).

Note (*a*) a full account of these wars is given because of their connexion with David's sin: (*b*) rapid growth of David's power implied by such extensive wars.

§ 2. *David's Fall.* His adultery with Bath-sheba (xi. 2—5): Uriah summoned to Jerusalem (xi. 6—13): David's letter to Joab; Uriah's death (xi. 14—17): the news brought to David (xi. 18—25): marriage of David and Bath-sheba (xi. 26, 27).

§ 3. *David's Repentance.* Nathan's parable (xii. 1—6): the king rebuked (xii. 7—14): death of Bath-sheba's child (xii. 15—23): birth of Solomon (xii. 24, 25): capture of Rabbah (xii. 26—31).

§ 4. *Family troubles.* Amnon's outrage (xiii. 1—22): Absalom's vengeance and flight (xiii. 23—39). Recall of Absalom: Joab's stratagem (xiv. 1—20): Absalom's return (xiv. 21—24): his person and family (xiv. 25—27): his readmission to the king's presence (xiv. 28—33).

§ 5. *Absalom's Rebellion and David's Flight.* Absalom's preparations (xv. 1—6): outbreak of the rebellion (xv. 7—12): David's Flight (xv. 13—18). Incidents of the Flight: Ittai's fidelity (xv. 19—23): the priests and the Ark (xv. 24—29): Hushai's commission (xv. 30—37): Ziba's present (xvi. 1—4): Shimei's cursing (xvi. 5—14). Absalom's entrance into Jerusalem (xvi. 15—19). Events at Jerusalem: Ahithophel's counsel (xvi. 20—23): Hushai's counsel (xvii. 1—14): Hushai's message to David (xvii. 15—22): Ahithophel's suicide (xvii. 23). The Civil War: progress of the rebellion (xvii. 24—26): reception of David at Mahanaim (xvii. 27—29): the battle (xviii. 1—8): death of Absalom (xviii. 9—18): the news brought to David; his grief (xviii. 19—33).

§ 6. *Restoration of David's authority.* David reproved by Joab (xix. 1—8): negotiations for the king's recall (xix. 9—15): David's return: incidents of the journey: Shimei pardoned (xix. 16—23): meeting with Mephibosheth (xix. 24—30): Barzillai's farewell (xix. 31—40). Dispute between Judah and Israel (xix. 41—43). Sheba's insurrection: the outbreak (xx. 1, 2): David's arrival at Jerusalem (xx. 3): pursuit of Sheba; Amasa murdered by Joab (xx. 4—13): siege of Abel Beth-Maachah: end of the insurrection (xx. 14—22). Officers of state after the restoration (xx. 23—26).

Note (*a*) how large a portion of the book is devoted to tracing the punishment of David's sin: (*b*) the graphic detail in the narrative

of Absalom's rebellion: (*c*) David's submission and resignation: (*d*) the ominous discord between Judah and Israel.

DIVISION III. **Supplementary Appendix: xxi.—xxiv.**

§ 1. *The Famine.* Execution of Saul's sons (xxi. 1—10): burial of the bones of Saul and his sons (xxi. 11—14).

§ 2. *Heroic exploits in the Philistine wars* (xxi. 15—22).

§ 3. *David's Psalm of Thanksgiving* (xxii).

§ 4. *David's Last Words* (xxiii. 1—7).

§ 5. *David's heroes.* The first Three (xxiii. 8—12): the well of Beth-lehem (xxiii. 13—17): Abishai and Benaiah (xxiii. 18—23): the Thirty (xxiii. 24—39).

§ 6. *David's sin in numbering the people.* The census taken (xxiv. 1—9): Gad sent to offer choice of punishments (xxiv. 10—14): the plague (xxiv. 15—17): purchase of Araunah's threshing-floor and erection of an altar (xxiv. 18—25).

This appendix forms a general supplement to the history of David's reign, illustrating (*a*) God's providential discipline of Israel, by two national punishments: (*b*) David's character, by two of his own writings: (*c*) the heroic spirit of the age, by the catalogue of his mighty men, and examples of their valorous exploits.

III. THE RELATION OF THE BOOK OF CHRONICLES TO THE BOOK OF SAMUEL.

1. The First Book of the Chronicles contains another history of David's reign. Many passages are word for word the same as the corresponding passages in the Book of Samuel; and many passages agree in substance, though differing more or less in detail. But much that is contained in Samuel is omitted in Chronicles, and much of the information in Chronicles is supplementary to the narrative of Samuel. Neither book is a complete history of David's reign: each compiler *selected* from the materials before him such portions as suited his purpose. The parallel sections are as follows:

1 Chr. x. 1—12 = 1 Sam. xxxi: 1 C. xi. 1—9 = 2 S. v. 1—3, 6—10: 1 C. xi. 10—41 = 2 S. xxiii. 8—39: 1 C. xiii = 2 S. vi. 1—11: 1 C. xiv = 2 S. v. 11—25: 1 C. xv, xvi (in part only) = 2 S. vi. 12—23: 1 C. xvii, xviii, xix = 2 S. vii, viii, x: 1 C. xx. 1—3 = 2 S. xi. 1, xii. 26—31: 1 C. xx. 4—8 = 2 S. xxi. 18—22: 1 C. xxi = 2 S. xxiv.

2. The following are the most important matters contained in Samuel and omitted in Chronicles:

The history of David's reign at Hebron and the civil war with the house of Saul (2 Sam. i.—iv.): David's kindness to Mephibosheth (2 Sam. ix.): David's adultery and its punishment, including the history of Absalom's rebellion (2 Sam. xi. 2—27, xii. 1—25, xiii.—xx.): the execution of Saul's sons (2 Sam. xxi. 1—14): David's Thanksgiving and Last Words (2 Sam. xxii, xxiii. 1—7).

3. The following are the most striking additions in Chronicles to the history contained in Samuel:

The catalogues of the warriors who joined David at Ziklag, and of those who came to Hebron to make him king (1 Chr. xii.): details of the arrangements for the translation of the Ark to Jerusalem (1 Chr. xiii. 1—5, xv, xvi.): many details in the account of the Plague (1 Chr. xxi.): David's preparations for the building of the Temple (1 Chr. xxii.): the organization of the Priests and Levites, the army, and the civil service (1 Chr. xxiii.—xxvii): the assembly of the people at Solomon's accession (1 Chr. xxviii, xxix).

4. In general then the compiler of the Book of Samuel gives a history of David's reign with special reference (*a*) to the vicissitudes through which he was raised by the care and guidance of Jehovah to be the head of a mighty kingdom: (*b*) to matters of, comparatively speaking, private interest in his life: (*c*) to the chastisements by which he was punished for his sin. He thus portrays David the man as well as David the king.

The compiler of Chronicles gives prominence (*a*) to all matters of religious ceremonial: (*b*) to the chief steps in the rise of David's kingdom, omitting the reverses which from time to time checked its growth.

5. These differences correspond to the age and object of the two historians. The compiler of Samuel was *a prophet,* and his narrative is penetrated by a prophetic spirit. He drew up, no long time after the events, a narrative of the foundation of the Theocratic Monarchy, selecting such matter as illustrated God's providential dealings with the king He had chosen.

6. The Book of Chronicles was written after the Return from the Captivity. Its author was most probably Ezra, who was *a priest,* and his main objects in compiling it were (*a*) to publish trustworthy genealogical records with a view to the re-settlement of the land, and the re-establishment of regular services in the restored temple: (*b*) to rekindle something of national life and spirit, and make the people feel that they were still the representatives of the Kingdom of God, and that national prosperity depended upon faithfulness to Jehovah. With this design he drew up a compendious history, tracing the fortunes of the kingdom of David from its foundation, and selecting especially such passages of the history as present the best kings engaged in promoting the cause of religion, and regulating the services of the house of God. Its purpose is *didactic* rather than *historical,* and its tone, in accordance with the profession of its author, *priestly* rather than *prophetic.*

7. Hence the prominence given to religious ceremonial and Levitical and priestly work in the history of David's reign:

hence the silence with which the darker episodes of that reign are passed over. The historian must not be accused of unfaithfulness, or inaccuracy, or prejudice, for adopting such a method of treatment; his history does not profess to be complete, and his selection of facts is justified by the special purpose which he has in view.

Such a review of its past history was well calculated to quicken the energies of the nation for the new era of its existence upon which it was entering; and to us the preservation of the work is valuable, as presenting another side of the national life, and adding (so far as concerns the period covered by the Second Book of Samuel) to the completeness of the picture which we can draw of David's reign, and the lessons which we can derive from it.

IV. THE CHRONOLOGY OF THE SECOND BOOK OF SAMUEL.

1. The chronology of the Second Book of Samuel is practically the chronology of David's reign. But the historian has arranged his work according to the subject-matter rather than the sequence of events, and the definite marks of time are few and unconnected.

2. The following is offered as a conjectural arrangement of the principal events in David's reign, but the dates must be distinctly understood to be only approximate.

Reign of David at Hebron (2 Sam. ii. 11), 1055—1048: Absalom's birth (?), 1050: reign of Ish-bosheth and civil war (2 Sam. ii. 10), 1050—1048: reign of David at Jerusalem (2 Sam. v. 4, 5), 1048—1015: period of foreign wars (2 Sam. viii.), 1045—1035: (in which are to be placed a period of peace (2 Sam. vii. 1), Mephibosheth's elevation, the famine (?)): adultery with Bath-sheba, 1035: Amnon's outrage, 1034: Absalom's rebellion, 1023: period of tranquillity and steady national growth, 1023—1015: the plague (?), 1018: David's death, 1015.

V. THE REIGN OF DAVID.

1. The First Book of Samuel brings the history of David's life down to the close of that period of preparatory discipline by which he was divinely educated for his high destiny. The Second Book of Samuel contains the history of his reign. But it does not profess to be either a complete or a chronological history. Considerable portions of David's reign, and many events of interest and importance, are passed over in silence, or with a passing allusion.

2. When the discipline of his early life was complete, the death of Saul opened David's way to the throne. The task

before him was immense. Internal disorganization consequent upon the misrule of Saul's later years; the jealousy of the partisans of the old dynasty; the antagonism of conflicting interests among the different tribes; a country overrun with victorious and powerful enemies; the certain prospect that any vigorous attempt to consolidate the kingdom would excite the hostility of foreign enemies—these were some of the difficulties which met him at the outset.

3. From such difficulties a weaker man might well have shrunk. But David was a born ruler of men. In his well-knit, sinewy frame, insensible to hardship, incapable of fatigue, he possessed the indispensable pre-requisite for a warrior king (2 Sam. xxii. 34 ff.): but higher qualifications than these were the aptitude for governing which was early displayed in his control of the wild spirits who gathered round him in his outlaw life; the courage which had characterised him from his earliest days (1 Sam. xvii. 34); and the power which he possessed of inspiring devotion in his followers (1 Sam. xviii. 5, 16; 2 Sam. xxiii. 15 ff.): while the highest qualification of all was his firm trust and unshaken dependence upon God, coupled with the consciousness of a divine commission, which led him in each crisis to "wait patiently upon God," in the confident expectation of divine guidance.

4. There are two clearly marked periods in the history of David's reign. During the first he reigned over Judah in Hebron, and during the second over all Israel in Jerusalem. His reign in Jerusalem is no less clearly divided into two periods in the view of the sacred historian, by the great sin which cast its fatal shadow over the later years of his life.

5. (i) *David's reign at Hebron.* The first five out of the seven and a half years during which David was king of Judah only are almost a blank in the history. Northern Palestine was occupied by the Philistines after the battle of Gilboa; the adherents of Saul's house established themselves in the Trans-Jordanic provinces; David quietly devoted himself to consolidating his little kingdom of Judah. It was not until Abner had succeeded in repulsing the Philistines, and re-organizing the disintegrated northern tribes, and had placed Ish-bosheth on the throne of Israel, that the two kingdoms came into collision. For two years a desultory civil war was waged, until at length the defection of Abner destroyed the last hopes of the house of Saul. His treacherous murder by Joab delayed the transference of the kingdom of Israel to David for a brief space only. Ish-bosheth's assassination shortly after removed the remaining excuse which the northern tribes had for holding aloof from David. The representatives of all Israel came to Hebron and unanimously offered the crown to him who had

been designated twenty years before as the King of Jehovah's choice. A national assembly was held, David was anointed for the third time, and a solemn covenant concluded between him and his subjects.

6. (ii) *David's reign at Jerusalem before his fall.* The first important undertaking of the new king was the capture of Jebus. Here he fixed his capital, and hither he transferred the Ark. Jerusalem thus became the sanctuary as well as the capital of the kingdom. This union of the political and religious centres inaugurated a new epoch in the nation's history. The day on which he welcomed the Ark into Zion, as the Advent of Jehovah to dwell in the midst of His people, was the greatest day of David's life.

7. In this first period of his reign are most probably to be placed the wars by which he established his dominion on a secure basis. Philistines, Moabites, Ammonites, Amalekites, Edomites, Syrians up to the very banks of the Euphrates, submitted to his irresistible advance. The powerful kingdom of Tyre became his ally; Hamath placed itself under his protectorate.

8. One brief interval of complete peace during this period allowed him to turn his attention to the cherished wish of his life, the plan of building a worthy Temple for Jehovah. Though he was not permitted to carry it out himself, he received a rich compensation in the prophecy of Nathan, by which an eternal dominion was promised to his house, and an assurance given that his own son should carry out the plan for which the fitting time had not yet fully come.

9. With the exception of the first failure to bring up the Ark to Jerusalem, and some temporary reverses in the field of battle (Ps. lx, title: see note on ch. viii. 13), only one great calamity, so far as we know, interrupted the prosperity of this period. Three years of famine, the punishment of Saul's breach of faith with the Gibeonites, taught Israel to reverence the sanctity of national oaths and treaties.

10. *David's reign after his fall.* The second period of David's reign at Jerusalem opens with his great sin. From that sin dates the commencement of the troubles of his life. The nation indeed does not seem to have suffered in its relations with foreign powers; but a series of calamities, partly involving the whole nation, partly affecting his own family only, embittered much of the last twenty years of David's reign.

His adultery with Bath-sheba, and his murder of Uriah, were dark blots upon his character. The sin was pardoned, but it could not be left unpunished. And the punishment came from the same source as the sin. The curse of poly-

gamy, permitted indeed but discountenanced by the Mosaic law, bore its natural fruit in the quarrels of sons, whom a mistaken affection had treated with foolish indulgence. Amnon's outrage, Absalom's revenge, his insurrection and wretched death, with all the miseries of civil war—these are the events which fill the pages of the history.

11. The impression produced by the record of David's reign in the Book of Samuel is that its latter years were a period of almost unrelieved disaster. The prophet-author is dwelling on the consequences of David's sins, and therefore gives prominence to the calamities which punished them. But this impression needs to be corrected. The closing period of David's reign, after the suppression of Absalom's rebellion, must have been on the whole a time of steady growth and prosperity. Otherwise it could not have laid the firm foundation which it did for the splendour of Solomon's reign. Administrative improvements, religious organization, preparations for building the Temple, occupied David, and were so successfully carried out, that Solomon succeeded to unchallenged empire, and was able at once to proceed with the building of the Temple.

12. One great calamity indeed cast its shadow over this period. Infatuated for a moment by a spirit of pride, which represented, it seems, a corresponding spirit in the nation, David ordered a census to be taken. The chastisement of pestilence rebuked both king and nation for their error.

13. Here the compiler of the Book of Samuel ends his narrative, and rightly so. The remaining scenes of David's life are the prelude to the reign of Solomon. The preparations for the building of the Temple, the rebellion of Adonijah, the king's parting charge to Solomon, are fitly placed at the beginning of the new era rather than at the close of the old.

14. The main results of David's reign may be briefly summed up as follows. (*a*) He consolidated the tribes into a nation, binding together the discordant elements of which it was composed into a vigorous unity. (*b*) By his conquests he secured to Israel the undisputed possession of its country, thereby ensuring the free field which was indispensable for the expansion and development of the nation, and through it of the true Religion which had been entrusted to its guardianship. In these two points Saul had to some extent anticipated him, and made his success possible. (*c*) But the noblest result of David's work was the harmonious union of all the highest influences for good which were at work in the nation. For once the religious and the secular powers acted in perfect co-operation. The Theocratic Monarchy was to be no absolute despotism. Its king was the representative of Jehovah, and his power was limited by this relation. He must therefore act

in obedience to the Will of Jehovah, communicated to him through the prophets. This was the ideal for which Samuel laboured. Saul was rejected for his endeavour to assert his own independence. David, though not without lapses and failures, on the whole realised the ideal, and was Israel's greatest, because truest, king. (*d*) Consequently, as will be seen further presently (§ vi), his reign was always looked back to as the golden age of the nation, the type of a still more glorious age to which the national hope looked forward.

Himself a warrior, he led the nation to victory; himself a prophet, and a pupil of one of the greatest of the prophets, he sympathised with the prophetic work, and yielded himself, without losing his royal dignity, to prophetic guidance; himself, though not by descent a priest, performing priestly functions, he was the patron of the hierarchy; and thus for a brief space, all the strongest and noblest powers of the nation were brought into harmony, and full scope given to their influences.

15. It remains to speak of David's character. "In the complexity of its elements, passion, tenderness, generosity, fierceness—the soldier, the shepherd, the poet, the statesman, the priest, the prophet, the king—the romantic friend, the chivalrous leader, the devoted father—there is no character of the O.T. at all to be compared to that of David." *Stanley*. It was this many-sidedness of character, combined with the variety of experience through which he passed, which has made his Psalms a manual of devotion for minds of every character and of every age. Rich and varied as are the tones of the many voices which combine to form the Psalter, they are scarcely more rich and varied than the tones of the single voice of him who was its Founder; passing as they do through every variation of unshaken trust in God, keenest suffering, bitter sorrow for sin, heartfelt repentance, jubilant praise and thanksgiving.

Men have wondered that the man who fell into such grievous sins should be called "the man after God's own heart," and regarded as the greatest king of Israel. His crimes were those of many an Oriental despot: but the sequel of those crimes—the earnest repentance, the prayer for renewal, the discipline of years by which the blessing of "a clean heart" and "a right spirit" was realised—could have occurred nowhere but under the influence of true divine teaching.

VI. THE TYPICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF DAVID'S REIGN AND LIFE.

1. The Jewish dispensation was a preparation for the coming of Christ. Many of its institutions, ordinances,

events, and characters, were *typical:* they were intended to be as it were *outlines* drawn beforehand to prefigure and foreshadow Christ, and to prepare men's minds to expect His coming.

2. The Kingdom of God in Israel was typical of the Kingdom of God afterwards to be established in the world; and the King of Israel was typical of Christ, the King of that universal kingdom. The characteristics of his office, as interpreted by a succession of prophets, led men to look for One who should perfectly realise the ideal, which had been imperfectly realised by the best of their human kings. The ideal form of government for Israel was a *Theocracy*, or direct government by God without any human ruler. *Theocratic King* is a convenient term to describe the true position of the King of Israel as God's vicegerent, ruling a kingdom which was not his own but God's.

3. The Theocratic King was typical of Christ in the following respects:

(1) His distinctive title was "the LORD'S *Anointed*:" and under this title men were led to look for the coming Deliverer as the MESSIAH or the CHRIST. (Luke ii. 26; John iv. 25.)

(2) He was the representative of Jehovah, who was Himself the true King of Israel; the instrument of the Divine government, through whom He dispensed deliverance, help, and blessing. He would therefore, if he was true to his calling, be a conquering king, before whom no enemies could stand (2 Sam. vii. 9, 10; Ps. lxxxix. 22, 23). So Christ came as the representative of God, with supreme authority on earth delegated to Him by His Father, and destined finally to conquer all enemies (John i. 18; Matt. xxviii. 18; 1 Cor. xv. 24, 25).

(3) His will was therefore to be in harmony with the will of God; and his kingdom would be, in proportion as it realised its purpose, a kingdom of righteousness and peace (see 2 Sam. xxiii. 3; Ps. lxxii. 1—7; ci.); foreshadowing imperfectly what was to be perfectly accomplished by Christ (Ps. xl. 7, 8; John iv. 34).

(4) In virtue of this relation to God he received the lofty title of God's Son (2 Sam. vii. 14, note; Ps. ii. 7, lxxxix. 26, 27; Acts xiii. 33; Heb. i. 5), signifying God's parental care over him, and the filial obedience due from him to God. This title is a most striking anticipation of the eternal sonship of Christ.

(5) He was not only the representative of God to his people, but as the head of his people, he was their representative before God. So Christ as the Son of man, the second Adam, is the representative of the human race.

(6) As the head of a kingdom of priests (Ex. xix. 6), he had a priestly character, and exercised some priestly functions

(2 Sam. vi. 14, 18, viii. 17; 1 Kings viii. 14, 55. Cp. Ps. cx. 4). In this also he was a type of Christ (Heb. x. 21).

(7) He was not only to be ruler of Israel, but "head of the nations" (2 Sam. xxii. 44; Ps. lxxii. 8—11), prefiguring the universal dominion of Christ.

4. In these respects any king of Israel, who at all fulfilled his office, was to some extent a type of Christ; and David, because he was the truest example of a king after God's own heart, was the most prominent and striking type of Christ among them. David, however, was a type in some respects in which his successors were not.

(1) He was not only King and Priest, but Prophet also (2 Sam. xxiii. 1 ff.), thus uniting in his own person the threefold character of Christ.

(2) He received the special title of "the servant of Jehovah," given only to a few who were raised up to do special work, such as Moses and Joshua. This was a distinctive title of Christ (see Matt. xii. 18; Acts iii. 13, 26, iv. 27, R. V.; Is. liii. 11, &c.).

(3) His birth-place determined the birth-place of the Messiah (Micah v. 2; Matt. ii. 6; John vii. 42).

5. For these reasons the expected Deliverer was sometimes styled not merely *the Son of David*, in accordance with the prophecy in 2 Sam. vii, but *David* (Hos. iii. 5; Jer. xxx. 9; Ezek. xxxiv. 23, 24, xxxvii. 24, 25). No name could be more appropriate for the ideal ruler of the future than that of the king who had most nearly attained to the ideal in the past.

6. But further, *the lives of the saints under the Old Covenant were typical of Christ.* They were anticipations, as the lives of saints since Christ came have been imitations, of His life. Their struggles, their sufferings, their teachings, their aspirations, pointed forward to Christ, and were "fulfilled" in Him. That which was partially exemplified in them was completely exhibited in Him. Consequently "the Christian Church from the earliest times has delighted to read in the Psalms the emotions, the devotions, the life, of Christ Himself." *Stanley.*

David, more than any other single individual, was a type, an anticipatory likeness, of Christ the Perfect Man. In the fervency of his aspirations, in the closeness of his communion with God, in the firmness of his trust, in the strength of his love, he was unrivalled by any human character of the Old Testament. No man ever "touched humanity at so many points;" and the manysidedness of his character, and the variety of his experience, which qualified him for practical sympathy with all ranks and all conditions of life among his subjects, made him again a type of Him whom "it behoved in all things to be made like unto his brethren" (Heb. ii. 17, 18, iv. 15).

VII. PSALMS ILLUSTRATIVE OF DAVID'S REIGN.

1. Of the Psalms ascribed to David by their titles many were in all probability not written by him. Those, however, which either by their titles, corroborated by their contents, or from internal evidence, can be assigned to particular epochs of his life, should be studied in connexion with the history.

2. (i) The Translation of the Ark to Jerusalem called forth a series of Psalms, first among which is Ps. ci. It expresses the high resolves and aspirations for the purity of his kingdom and his court which filled David's mind when he was meditating the transfer of the Ark to his new capital, which would thus become in an especial sense "the city of Jehovah" (*v.* 8). The eager exclamation "When wilt thou come unto me" (*v.* 2) expresses his desire to welcome the symbol of Jehovah's Presence as a dweller in his new city.

Ps. xv, in language closely resembling the opening verses of Ps. xxiv, sets forth the conditions of acceptable approach to God, and dwells upon the thoughts with which he would prepare the mind of his people for the solemn event about to be celebrated.

The date of Ps. lxviii. is disputed, but it may well be regarded as a grand choral hymn, composed by David to be sung at the removal of the Ark to Zion, as the procession left the house of Obed-edom. The opening words re-echo the old watchword for the setting forward of the Ark in the wilderness (Num. x. 35). "God is represented, first as advancing at the head of the Israelites through the desert; then as leading them victoriously into Canaan; and finally as fixing His royal abode on Zion, whence He reigns in the majesty of universal dominion, acknowledged and feared by all the nations of the earth." *Dean Perowne.*

Ps. xxiv. was beyond a doubt composed to be sung by choirs of Levites as the Ark passed through the gates of Zion to its new resting-place. "We can almost hear the creaking of the gates of the old fortress of Jebus, as their hinges swung sullenly open to admit the Ark of the Living God... Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up ye everlasting doors, and the King of Glory shall come in." *Bp. Wilberforce.*

The Psalms of this period are characterised by their lofty moral requirements, by a stern exclusiveness, a noble intolerance of pride and falsehood.

3. (ii) The spirit in which the wars of this period were waged is illustrated by Ps. xx, which is a litany to be sung on the eve of the king's going forth to battle; and by Ps. xxi, which is a Te Deum of thanksgiving for his return. To these may be added Ps. cx. and perhaps Ps. ii. Ps. lx. belongs to the wars with Syria and Edom (2 Sam. viii. 13, note).

4. (iii) The culmination of David's prosperity is celebrated in Ps. xviii. (2 Sam. xxii.), written probably soon after Nathan's visit (2 Sam. vii.), in that period of peace in which he conceived the wish to build an house for Jehovah. It is the fitting expression of a heart overflowing with praise and thanksgiving, and is unrivalled for the magnificence of its poetry and the sublimity of its thought.

5. (iv) David's Fall was the occasion of two of the most precious Psalms in the whole Psalter. The Fifty-first Psalm is David's prayer for pardon and renewal, springing from the newly-awakened conviction of his sin: the Thirty-second Psalm is a review of his experience written somewhat later, in which he dwells upon the blessedness of forgiveness obtained, and describes the misery he had suffered while his sin was still unconfessed and unrepented of.

6. (v) The Flight from Absalom struck a rich vein of Psalmody. Ps. lxiii. is stated by its title to have been written by David "when he was in the wilderness of Judah," in all probability between the flight from Jerusalem and the passage of the Jordan. Ps. iii. is a morning hymn, and Ps. iv. an evening hymn, composed on the day following that on which he quitted Jerusalem. Ps. xxvi, and possibly Ps. lxii, refer to the traitors who had deserted him at this crisis; xxvii. and xxviii. probably describe his feelings during his exile at Mahanaim. The characteristic features of these Psalms are the consciousness of God's continued help, unbroken trust, firm assurance of ultimate deliverance; eager yearning for the privileges of the sanctuary. They expand the thought of David's words to Zadok: "If I shall find favour in the eyes of the LORD, he will bring me again, and shew me both the ark and his habitation" (2 Sam. xv. 25).

Pss. xli. and lv. have been assigned to the time during which the conspiracy was being hatched: lxix. and cix. have very generally been supposed to refer to Ahithophel's treachery. But these references are at best doubtful; and lxix. and cix. are almost certainly not Davidic.

7. (vi) There are no Psalms which can be pointed to with certainty as embodying the thoughts of David's later years. Ps. xxxvii. may indeed possibly be his, and if so, *vv.* 2—9 are a worthy summing up of lessons learnt through the vicissitudes of a long life. The "last words of David" (2 Sam. xxiii. 1—7) seem to stand alone, and have no companion in the Psalter.

THE SECOND BOOK OF SAMUEL,

OTHERWISE CALLED,

THE SECOND BOOK OF THE KINGS.

NOW it came to pass after the death of Saul, when David 1
was returned from the slaughter of the Amalekites, and
David had abode two days in Ziklag; it came even to pass 2
on the third day, that behold, a man came out of the camp
from Saul with his clothes rent, and earth upon his head:
and *so* it was, when he came to David, that he fell to the
earth, and did obeisance. And David said unto him, From 3
whence comest thou? And he said unto him, Out of the
camp of Israel am I escaped. And David said unto him, 4
How went the matter? I pray thee, tell me. And he an-
swered, That the people are fled from the battle, and many
of the people also are fallen and dead; and Saul and Jonathan
his son are dead also. And David said unto the young man 5
that told him, How knowest thou that Saul and Jonathan
his son be dead? And the young man that told him said, As 6

I. **1—16.** The news of Saul's death brought to David.

1. And it came to pass &c. (R.V.). The narrative of the closing chapters of the First Book is continued without any break. The division of the Books did not exist in the original Hebrew text. See *Introd.*, § 1. *when David* &c.] See 1 Sam. xxx. 26.

2. *on the third day*] The exact position of Ziklag in the *Negeb*, or "South country," has not been determined. But if it was near Beer-sheba (see on 1 Sam. xxvii. 6), the distance from the battle-field of Gilboa was about 90 or 100 miles, between two and three days' journey for an active runner, so that the battle probably took place about the same time as David's return home. *with his clothes rent, and earth upon his head*] Cp. 1 Sam. iv. 12. *did obeisance*] Recognising David as Saul's successor, and expecting a reward for his tidings. *Obeisance*, derived from Lat. *obedire* through Fr. *obéissance*, originally meant *obedience*, but in Bible-English is limited to the act of prostration, which was the token of obedience or reverence. **4.** *How went the matter?*] Comp. Eli's question in 1 Sam. iv. 16 (R.V.). *many of the people*] No contradiction to 1 Sam. xxxi. 6, where "*all* his men" refers to Saul's immediate body-guard. **6.** He represents himself as accidentally finding Saul, while wandering over Mount Gilboa in

I happened by chance upon mount Gilboa, behold, Saul
leaned upon his spear; and lo, the chariots and horsemen
7 followed hard after him. And when he looked behind him,
he saw me, and called unto me. And I answered, Here *am* I.
8 And he said unto me, Who *art* thou? And I answered him, I
9 *am* an Amalekite. He said unto me again, Stand, I pray thee,
upon me, and slay me: for anguish is come upon me, because
10 my life *is* yet whole in me. So I stood upon him, and slew
him, because I was sure that he could not live after *that* he was
fallen: and I took the crown that *was* upon his head, and
the bracelet that *was* on his arm, and have brought them
11 hither unto my lord. Then David took hold on his clothes,
and rent them; and likewise all the men that *were* with him:
12 and they mourned, and wept, and fasted until even, for Saul,
and for Jonathan his son, and for the people of the LORD, and
for the house of Israel; because they were fallen by the sword.
13 And David said unto the young man that told him, Whence
art thou? And he answered, I *am* the son of a stranger, an

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the confusion of the rout. *mount Gilboa*] See note on 1 Sam. xxviii. 4. *Saul leaned upon his spear*] This is not to be understood of attempted suicide (1 Sam. xxxi. 4). It is a tragic picture of the last scene. The wounded and weary king leans upon his spear—the emblem of his royalty—for support. His followers are scattered or dead: his pursuers are close at hand. Death, accompanied with all the insolence and mockery of a triumphant foe, stares him in the face. **9. And he said unto me, Stand, I pray thee, beside me** (marg. *over me*), **and slay me, for anguish** (marg. *giddiness*) **hath taken hold of me; because** &c. (R.V.). Saul is represented as standing (*v.* 6), not as prostrate on the ground; but no longer able to defend himself, and afraid that he may fall alive into the hands of the Philistines. Cp. 1 Sam. xxxi. 4. **10.** *after* that *he was fallen*] Not to be understood literally, of lying prostrate, but metaphorically, of defeat and disgrace. *the crown*] Probably a light **diadem** worn round the helmet as the mark of royalty. *the bracelet*] Armlets are still worn by Oriental sovereigns. Kings and distinguished warriors are represented on Egyptian and Assyrian monuments as wearing highly ornamented bracelets or armlets.

11. *on*] "On" used as we now use "of." Cp. 1 Sam. xxvii. 11.

12. *mourned*] Lit. *beat their breasts*, still a common expression of mourning in the East. *fasted until even*] Comp. 1 Sam. xxxi. 13; 2 Sam. iii. 35, xii. 21, 22. The day's fast terminated at sunset, as at the present day in Mahommedan countries. *for the people* &c.] By *the people of Jehovah* is meant the army, gathered to fight Jehovah's battles against the heathen. Cp. 1 Sam. xxv. 28, and for *people* = *army* cp. *v.* 4 and 1 Sam. iv. 3. *The house of Israel* describes the whole nation united under Saul, and now broken and scattered by his defeat and death. **13.** *the son of a stranger, an Amalekite*] Or, *the son of an Amalekite*

Amalekite. And David said unto him, How wast thou not 14
afraid to stretch forth thine hand to destroy the LORD'S
anointed? And David called one of the young men, and said, 15
Go near, *and* fall upon him. And he smote him that he died.
And David said unto him, Thy blood *be* upon thy head; for 16
thy mouth hath testified against thee, saying, I have slain the
LORD'S anointed.

And David lamented with this lamentation over Saul and 17
over Jonathan his son: (also he bade *them* teach the children 18
of Judah the *use of the* bow: behold, *it is* written in the book
of Jasher.)

The beauty of Israel *is* slain upon thy high places: 19

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stranger, i.e. an Amalekite who had migrated into the land of Israel. **14.** The person of the king, consecrated to the service of Jehovah by anointing, was inviolable. Comp. David's words in 1 Sam. xxiv. 6, xxvi. 9, 11, 16; and the armourbearer's reverence in 1 Sam. xxxi. 4. **16.** *for thy mouth* &c.] For the expression cp. Job xv. 6; Lk. xix. 22. He had accused himself of a crime, for which he deserved to die. This account of Saul's death is obviously inconsistent with that given in 1 Sam. xxxi. The Amalekite's story was a fabrication. In wandering over the field of battle he had found the corpse of Saul and stripped it of its ornaments. With these he hastened to David, and told his tale in the hope of securing a reward. David inflicted the penalty which the Amalekite deserved according to his own avowal. His loyalty and unselfishness in mourning for the death of his persecutor are striking evidences of the nobility of his character.

17—27. David's lamentation for Saul and Jonathan.

17. *lamentation*] The technical expression for a *death-dirge* or *mournful elegy*, such as that pronounced by David over Abner (ch. iii. 33, 34), and by Jeremiah over Josiah (2 Chr. xxxv. 25).

18. And he bade them teach the children of Judah *the song of* **the bow** (R.V.). David's elegy was called "the Bow" from the mention of Jonathan's bow in *v.* 22. Somewhat similarly the section of Exodus containing the account of the burning bush is called "the Bush" in Lk. xx. 37. The elegy was to be learnt by heart by the people in order to preserve the memory of Saul and Jonathan fresh among them. Compare the direction concerning the Song of Moses (Deut. xxxi. 19), and the title of Psalm lx. The poem was preserved in **the Book of Jashar** (R.V.), or, *the Upright*. This book is mentioned only here and in Josh. x. 13. It was probably a collection of poems, commemorating remarkable events or great heroes: so that it formed a "book of Golden Deeds" for the instruction of posterity, a "national anthology" to which additions would be made from time to time as occasion offered. "The Upright" is explained by some to mean Israel as the covenant people of God, and connected in etymology and sense with the title *Jeshurun* (Deut. xxxii. 15); by others it is referred to the heroes whose praises were celebrated in the book. **19.** *The beauty of Israel*] R.V. **Thy glory, O**

How are the mighty fallen!
20 Tell *it* not in Gath,
Publish *it* not in the streets of Askelon;
Lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice,
Lest the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph.
21 Ye mountains of Gilboa, *let there be* no dew,
Neither *let there be* rain upon you, nor fields of offerings:
For there the shield of the mighty is vilely cast away,
The shield of Saul, *as though he had* not *been* anointed with oil.

Israel. Saul and Jonathan are thus described as the chief ornament and honour of Israel. The word translated *thy glory* may also mean *The gazelle* (R.V. marg.); and those who adopt this rendering suppose that Jonathan's beauty and swiftness of foot had gained for him the name of 'the Gazelle.' But as the elegy celebrates both Saul and Jonathan, the opening word cannot be limited to the latter only. *thy high places*] Gilboa is meant. The expression suggests the extremity of the disaster, when the mountain-strongholds of the land were forced and their defenders slain. Cp. note on ch. xxii. 34. **20.** A poetical wish that it were possible for Israel to be spared the degradation of Philistine triumph. The news was, in fact, carried at once throughout the land (1 Sam. xxxi. 9). Gath on account of its political importance, Ashkelon as a great religious centre, are chosen as representative of the whole country. The temple of Ashtaroth in which Saul's armour was deposited (1 Sam. xxxi. 10) was probably the famous temple of Venus at Ashkelon. The phrase "Tell it not in Gath" passed into a proverb (Micah i. 10, R.V.). *the daughters of the Philistines*] Victories were celebrated by women with songs and dances. Cp. 1 Sam. xviii. 6; Ex. xv. 20, 21. *the uncircumcised*] The common epithet for the Philistines, as heathen who had no share in Jehovah's covenant with Israel. Cp. 1 Sam. xiv. 6. **21.** Nature is summoned to share in the mourning. The scene of such a terrible disaster should be unvisited by fertilizing dew and rain, and lie smitten with eternal barrenness. For the thought that nature can sympathize with man comp. Ezek. xxxi. 15. *nor fields of offerings*] Gilboa should no longer possess fruitful fields, to produce tithes and offerings for Jehovah. The greatest curse which can befall it is to be cut off from rendering service to Jehovah. Comp. the description of extreme famine in Joel i. 9. *is vilely cast away*] R.V. **was vilely cast away:** marg. *was defiled*, with blood and dust. *the shield* &c.] R.V. **the shield of Saul, not anointed with oil.** The royal shield is represented as left upon the battle-field, uncared for, uncleansed from the stains of the combat. Shields made of metal were oiled to polish them; those made of wood and leather, to preserve them, and make missiles glide off easily. Cp. Is. xxi. 5. But the words may be translated as in R.V. marg., 'as of one *not anointed*,' and the sense thus gained is much more forcible. 'There the shield of mighty heroes was de-

From the blood of the slain, 22
From the fat of the mighty,
The bow of Jonathan turned not back,
And the sword of Saul returned not empty.
Saul and Jonathan *were* lovely and pleasant in their lives, 23
And in their death they were not divided:
They were swifter than eagles,
They were stronger than lions.
Ye daughters of Israel, weep over Saul, 24
Who clothed you in scarlet, with *other* delights,
Who put on ornaments of gold upon your apparel.
How are the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle! 25
O Jonathan, *thou wast* slain in thine high places.
I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan: 26
Very pleasant hast thou been unto me:
Thy love to me was wonderful,
Passing the love of women.
How are the mighty fallen, 27
And the weapons of war perished!

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filed—yea even the shield of Saul, who shared the common fate as though he had never been consecrated as the Anointed of Jehovah.

22. *From the blood* &c.] In the figurative language of poetry arrows are represented as *drinking blood*, the sword as *eating flesh*. See Deut. xxxii. 42; Is. xxxiv. 6; Jer. xlvi. 10.

the bow of Jonathan] His favourite weapon, by the gift of which he sealed his friendship with David. See 1 Sam. xviii. 4, xx. 20.

23. *lovely and pleasant*] The words express the mutual affection which existed between father and son. Jonathan remained faithful to his filial duty even when his father was persecuting his closest friend, and Saul, in spite of temporary outbursts of passion, loved his son to the last. *swifter than eagles*] Comp. Jer. iv. 13; Hab. i. 8. *stronger than lions*] Comp. ch. xvii. 10; Jud. xiv. 18. **24.** The women who had once celebrated Saul's triumphs, and shared the spoil of his victories, are summoned to lament his loss. Saul's successful wars, so briefly alluded to in the history of his reign (1 Sam. xiv. 47), had greatly enriched the nation. *with* other *delights*] R.V. **delicately**; Heb. *with delights*. **25.** *O Jonathan* &c.] R.V. **Jonathan is slain upon thy high places:** or, as marg. *O Jonathan, slain* &c. The hero of a hundred fights is slain at last upon those mountain strongholds of his country which he had once won and defended so successfully (1 Sam. xiv.). **27.** *How are the mighty fallen*] This thrice-repeated refrain sounds the keynote of the elegy. Comp. Ps. xlii. 5, 11, xliii. 5, cvii. 8, 15, 21, 31. *the weapons of war*] Metaphorically, of Saul and Jonathan as the instruments of battle for the nation. Cp. Is. xiii. 5. The poetic beauty, the chivalrous loyalty, the tender love, which characterize this most pathetic of funeral odes, need no comment. "David dwells with unmixed love on the brighter recollections of the departed. He speaks

2 And it came to pass after this, that David inquired of the
LORD, saying, Shall I go up into any of the cities of Judah?
And the LORD said unto him, Go up. And David said, Whither
2 shall I go up? And he said, Unto Hebron. So David went up
thither, and his two wives also, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and
3 Abigail Nabal's wife the Carmelite. And his men that *were*
with him did David bring up, every man with his household:
4 and they dwelt in the cities of Hebron. And the men of
Judah came, and there they anointed David king over the house
of Judah.

And they told David, saying, *That* the men of Jabesh-gilead
5 *were they* that buried Saul. And David sent messengers unto
the men of Jabesh-gilead, and said unto them, Blessed *be* ye of
the LORD, that ye have shewed this kindness unto your lord,
6 *even* unto Saul, and have buried him. And now the LORD

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only of the Saul of earlier times, the mighty conqueror, the delight of his people, the father of his beloved and faithful friend; like him in life, united with him in death." *Stanley.*

II. **1—4** *a.* David anointed King over Judah at Hebron.

1. After the death of Saul and Jonathan, David saw that the way was clear for the fulfilment of God's promise that he should be king. Still he desired direction, and therefore "inquired of the LORD" through the High-priest Abiathar by means of the Urim and Thummim in the Ephod. Comp. 1 Sam. x. 22, xxiii. 6. *Unto Hebron*] The central position of Hebron in the tribe of Judah, its mountainous and defensible situation, its importance as a priestly settlement and an ancient royal city, the patriarchal associations connected with it, all combined to render it the most suitable capital for the new kingdom, while the North was held partly by the Philistines, partly by Saul's adherents. In its neighbourhood moreover David had spent a considerable part of his fugitive life, and gained many supporters. See 1 Sam. xxx. 31.

2. *Ahinoam—Abigail*] Cp. 1 Sam. xxv. 42, 43. The *Jezreel* to which Ahinoam belonged was a city in the mountains of Judah, not far from Carmel, where Nabal's property was (1 Sam. xxv. 2). R.V. **Abigail the wife of N. the Carmelite.** **3.** *the cities of Hebron*] The towns and villages of the district round Hebron. **4.** An assembly of David's own tribe was held in order to elect him king. No doubt he had previously secured the support of the elders. Cp. 1 Sam. xxx. 26. David had been anointed privately by Samuel to mark God's choice of him as the future king (1 Sam. xvi. 13), but it was natural that the ceremony should be repeated publicly as the formal inauguration of his reign, and even a third time, when he was made king over all Israel (ch. v. 3). **4** *b*—**7.** David's message to the Gileadites. The R.V. rightly begins a fresh paragraph here. If David could secure the support of the capital of Gilead (1 Sam. xi. 1), he might reckon on speedily extending his power over the whole country. His conciliatory message is virtually an appeal to them to recognise

shew kindness and truth unto you: and I also will requite you this kindness, because ye have done this thing. Therefore 7
now let your hands be strengthened, and be ye valiant: for your master Saul is dead, and also the house of Judah have anointed me king over them.

But Abner the son of Ner, captain of Saul's host, took 8
Ish-bosheth the son of Saul, and brought him over *to* Mahanaim; and he made him king over Gilead, and over the 9

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him as Saul's legitimate successor. **6.** *kindness and truth*, i.e. *mercy* and *faithfulness*, are attributes of God's character often coupled together. See Ex. xxxiv. 6; Ps. xxv. 10, xl. 11, lvii. 3, lxxxvi. 15, &c. *I also* &c.] Lit. **I also will show you this good**, viz. the honourable embassy of thanks, and the friendly spirit which it attested. **7.** R.V. **Now therefore let your hands be strong...for Saul your lord** &c. (cp. 1 Sam. xxvi. 15 &c. R.V.): i.e. *though* your master Saul is dead, *yet* the house of Judah &c. David hoped that the men of Jabesh would join him, and hold the land of Gilead against the Philistines until he could come to their aid. As however Gilead became the head-quarters of Ish-bosheth, it does not appear that the embassy was successful.

8—11. Ish-bosheth set up by Abner as a rival to David.

8. R.V. **Now Abner...had taken.** The historian goes back to relate events immediately succeeding the battle of Gilboa. Abner had escaped from the fatal field and carried Ish-bosheth with him across the Jordan, while the country west of the Jordan was abandoned to the Philistines (1 Sam. xxxi. 7). Both by his relationship of first cousin to Saul (1 Sam. xiv. 50, note), and by his office as commander of the army, Abner was marked out as the natural champion of Saul's house. *Ish-bosheth*] Saul's fourth son, not previously mentioned, was a mere tool in the hands of Abner. His original name was Esh-baal, = *man of Baal* (1 Chr. viii. 33, ix. 39), but this has been changed to Ish-bosheth, = *man of shame*, to avoid the scandal of pronouncing the name of Baal. Compare the substitution of Mephibosheth for Meribbaal (2 Sam. iv. 4; 1 Chr. viii. 34), and Jerubbesheth for Jerubbaal (2 Sam. xi. 21; Jud. viii. 35), and see Hos. ix. 10; Jer. xi. 13. Probably the change was made in books commonly read, while the original form was retained in the genealogy in 1 Chr. to *Mahanaim*] Situated on the frontier between Gad and Manasseh (Josh. xiii. 26, 30), perhaps at *Mahneh*, a few miles E. of Jabesh-Gilead. See Gen. xxxii. 2, 10; 2 Sam. xvii. 24, xviii. 24. **9.** *Gilead*] Here apparently, as in Josh. xxii. 9, Gilead denotes the whole district occupied by the Israelites to the E. of the Jordan. *the Ashurites*] Or *Asherites* (Jud. i. 31, 32), i.e. the tribe of Asher, named as the principal inhabitants of Western Palestine north of the plain of Esdraelon. The Vulgate and Syriac versions however read *Geshurites*, the tribe which maintained itself among the Israelites in the district S. of Mount Hermon (Josh. xiii. 13), to be distinguished from the independent kingdom of Geshur in Syria (ch. iii. 3), and from the Geshurites on the borders of Philistia (1 Sam. xxvii. 8).

Ashurites, and over Jezreel, and over Ephraim, and over Ben-
10 jamin, and over all Israel. Ish-bosheth Saul's son *was* forty
years old when he *began* to reign over Israel, and reigned two
11 years. But the house of Judah followed David. And the time
that David was king in Hebron over the house of Judah was
seven years and six months.
12 And Abner the son of Ner, and the servants of Ish-bosheth
13 the son of Saul, went out from Mahanaim to Gibeon. And
Joab the son of Zeruiah, and the servants of David, went out,

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Jezreel] The plain of Esdraelon is thus named from its principal city. *all Israel*] Ish-bosheth's dominions were extended until they included all the country which afterwards formed the kingdom of Israel as distinguished from that of Judah. **10.** *forty years old*] This statement involves a double difficulty. (*a*) About 32 years is the most that can be assigned to Saul's reign (see note on 1 Sam. xiii. 1, and Introd. to 1 Sam., p. 9), so that it represents his youngest son as born before his accession, which is improbable. (*b*) Ish-bosheth's eldest brother Jonathan seems to have been about the same age as David, and therefore not much more than thirty at the time of his death. Possibly the numeral has been corrupted in transcription. *two years*] The duration of Ish-bosheth's reign is probably reckoned from the time when Abner succeeded in establishing his authority over *all* Israel. Five years and a half were occupied with the reconquest of the land from the Philistines, and these two years synchronize with the last two of David's reign at Hebron.

12—17. The Combat at Gibeon.

12. *went out*] The technical expression for going to war. Cp. 1 Sam. xviii. 30. After establishing Ish-bosheth's power over all Israel, Abner turned his arms against Judah, and marched with his army to Gibeon, where David's army under the command of Joab met him. *Gibeon*] Gibeon (=*belonging to*, or *built on*, *a hill*) situated on a rounded hill five miles N.W. of Jerusalem, which still bears the name *El-Jib*, was originally a Hivite city (Josh. ix. 3 ff., x. 2). It was in the territory of Benjamin (Josh. xviii. 25), and specially assigned to the priests (Josh. xxi. 17). It gained its chief importance in the reigns of David and Solomon, as the place at which the Tabernacle and the Altar of Burnt-offering were set up before the building of the Temple (2 Chr. i. 3, 5; 1 Kings iii. 4—15).

13. *Joab the son of Zeruiah*] The eldest of David's three nephews, the son of his sister Zeruiah (1 Chr. ii. 16). Next to the king himself he occupies the most conspicuous position in the history of David's reign. Already he appears to have acted as commander-in-chief, though his formal appointment to that post was the reward of his valour at the capture of Jebus (1 Chr. xi. 6; 2 Sam. viii. 16). In this capacity he (*a*) conducted the war against the Syrians and Ammonites (2 Sam. x. 7); (*b*) completed the conquest of Edom (1 Kings xi. 15, 16); (*c*) defeated the Ammonites in a second war, and took their capital (2 Sam. xi. 1, xii. 26). With a too ready subservience he carried out David's plan for getting rid of Uriah

and met together by the pool of Gibeon: and they sat down, the one on the one side of the pool, and the other on the other side of the pool. And Abner said to Joab, Let the young men 14 now arise, and play before us. And Joab said, Let them arise. Then there arose and went over by number twelve of 15 Benjamin, which *pertained* to Ish-bosheth the son of Saul, and twelve of the servants of David. And they caught every one 16 his fellow by the head, and *thrust* his sword in his fellow's side; so they fell down together: wherefore that place was called Helkath-hazzurim, which *is* in Gibeon. And there was 17 a very sore battle that day; and Abner was beaten, and the men of Israel, before the servants of David.

And there were three sons of Zeruiah there, Joab, and 18

(2 Sam. xi. 14 ff.), a service which increased his influence over David, by giving him the possession of his guilty secret. We find him scheming to secure the restoration of Absalom to David's favour (2 Sam. xiv), yet remaining loyal to David in Absalom's rebellion (2 Sam. xviii. 2). The unscrupulous vindictiveness of his character is illustrated by his murder of Abner (2 Sam. iii. 27); of Absalom (2 Sam. xviii. 14); of Amasa (2 Sam. xx. 10). Too valuable to be dispensed with, too fierce to be controlled, he was a continual source of vexation to David (2 Sam. iii. 39), who gave Solomon a dying charge not to leave his crimes unpunished (1 Kings ii. 5, 6). For his complicity in Adonijah's rebellion he met a traitor's death (1 Kings ii. 28—34). *met together*] R.V. **met them.**

the pool of Gibeon] Comp. Jer. xli. 12. A fine fountain and two large reservoirs still exist close to the village of *El-Jîb*. *they sat down*] i.e. halted and encamped. **14.** Desirous to avoid the horrors of a civil war, Abner proposes to decide the day by a combat between two bodies of picked men. The combat of the Horatii and Curiatii, which decided the war between Alba and Rome, affords a parallel in classical story. *The young men* are the "servants" (*vv.* 12, 13) or soldiers of Ish-bosheth and David (iv. 12): *play* is an euphemism for fighting. **15.** R.V. **Then they arose and went over by number; twelve for Benjamin, and for Ish-bosheth the son of Saul, and twelve of the servants of David.** A fixed number from either side met on neutral ground between the two armies. **16.** Self-defence was forgotten in the ferocity of the struggle, and all the combatants fell together. *Helkath-hazzurim*] Meaning probably *the field of the sharp knives* (R.V. marg.), in allusion to the swords which proved so fatal. **17.** The combat of champions having proved indecisive, a general engagement took place, ending in the defeat of Abner's forces.

18—23. The Death of Asahel.

18. And the three sons of Zeruiah were there (R.V.). The standing designation of David's nephews, to shew their relationship to him (1 Chr. ii. 16). *as a wild roe*] The wild roe or **gazelle,** which still abounds in Palestine, is celebrated for its

Abishai, and Asahel: and Asahel *was as* light of foot as a wild
19 roe. And Asahel pursued after Abner; and in going he turned
not to the right hand nor to the left from following Abner.
20 Then Abner looked behind him, and said, *Art* thou Asahel?
21 And he answered, I *am*. And Abner said to him, Turn thee
aside to thy right hand or to thy left, and lay thee hold on one
of the young men, and take thee his armour. But Asahel would
22 not turn aside from following of him. And Abner said again
to Asahel, Turn thee aside from following me: wherefore
should I smite thee to the ground? how then should I hold up
23 my face to Joab thy brother? Howbeit he refused to turn
aside: wherefore Abner with the hinder end of the spear
smote him under the fifth *rib*, that the spear came out behind
him; and he fell down there, and died in the same place: and
it came to pass, that as many as came to the place where
Asahel fell down and died stood still.

24 Joab also and Abishai pursued after Abner: and the sun
went down when they were come to the hill of Ammah, that
25 *lieth* before Giah *by* the way of the wilderness of Gibeon. And
the children of Benjamin gathered themselves together after
Abner, and became one troop, and stood on the top of a hill.
26 Then Abner called to Joab, and said, Shall the sword devour for
ever? knowest thou not that it will be bitterness in the latter

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swiftness, grace, beauty, and gentleness. Cp. 1 Chr. xii. 8; Prov. vi. 5. **20.** R.V. **Is it thou, Asahel? And he answered, It is I.** **21.** *his armour*] Probably, as in Jud. xiv. 19, **his spoil:** i.e. if Asahel was desirous of spoil, he might find it elsewhere, instead of attacking a practised warrior at the risk of his life. **23.** *with the hinder end of the spear*] Abner defended himself in this way with a view to disable rather than kill Asahel. But the butt-end of the spear, shod with iron to be stuck in the ground (1 Sam. xxvi. 7), dealt a fatal blow. *under the fifth* rib] R.V. **in the belly;** and so in iii. 27, iv. 6, xx. 10. *stood still*] Riveted to the spot with awe and grief, mourning the untimely fate of the young hero. Cp. ch. xx. 12.

24—32. The Pursuit. Asahel's burial.

24. *Joab also* &c.] **But Joab** (R.V.) and Abishai continued the pursuit, in contrast to those who halted at the scene of Asahel's death. *the hill of Ammah...Giah*] Nothing is known of these places, but the minuteness of topographical detail is an indication that the history was written by one who was familiar with the circumstances. *the wilderness of Gibeon*] The untilled tract of pasture-land, lying east of the city. **25.** *one troop*] R.V. **one band.** The men of Saul's tribe prepared to fight for his son's cause to the last; and Abner chose a strong position in which to rally the remnant of his scattered forces. **26, 27.** Abner found fault with Joab for continuing the pursuit, and aggravating the bitterness of hostility between the tribes. Joab retorts that Abner

end? how long shall it be then, ere thou bid the people return
from following their brethren? And Joab said, *As* God liveth, 27
unless thou hadst spoken, surely then in the morning the
people had gone up every one from following his brother. So 28
Joab blew a trumpet, and all the people stood still, and pur-
sued after Israel no more, neither fought they any more. And 29
Abner and his men walked all that night through the plain,
and passed over Jordan, and went *through* all Bithron, and
they came *to* Mahanaim. And Joab returned from following 30
Abner: and when he had gathered all the people together, there
lacked of David's servants nineteen men and Asahel. But the 31
servants of David had smitten of Benjamin, and of Abner's
men, *so that* three hundred and threescore men died. And 32
they took up Asahel, and buried him in the sepulchre of his
father, which *was in* Beth-lehem. And Joab and his men went
all night, and they came to Hebron at break of day.

Now there was long war between the house of Saul and the 3
house of David: but David waxed stronger and stronger, and
the house of Saul waxed weaker and weaker. And unto 2
David were sons born in Hebron: and his firstborn was Am-
non, of Ahinoam the Jezreelitess; and his second, Chileab, 3
of Abigail the wife of Nabal the Carmelite; and the third,

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himself was to blame for the commencement of the battle. **If thou hadst not spoken** (see *v.* 14), and challenged us to fight, **surely then in the morning the people had gone away, nor followed every one his brother** (R.V.). The armies might have dispersed without fighting. **28.** *neither fought they any more*] For the time being only. It was not the final end of the war, which lasted for some time afterwards (ch. iii. 1).

29. *walked* &c.] R.V. **went all that night through the Arabah,** or valley of the Jordan. Fearing a renewal of hostilities they made good their retreat at once. *Bithron*] Probably some *district intersected by ravines*, between the Jordan and Mahanaim. **32.** *in the sepulchre of his father...in Beth-lehem*] The only reference to Zeruiah's husband, who appears from this notice to have been a Bethlehemite. Josephus calls him *Suri*.

went all night] Clearly the night after Asahel's burial, not the night after the battle. Joab no doubt spent the night at Gibeon, marched to Beth-lehem the next day, and after burying his brother, hastened on to report himself to David at Hebron.

III. **1—5.** Progress of David's cause. His family. [*vv.* 2—5 = 1 Chr. iii. 1—3.] *Amnon*] Infamous for the sin which cost him his life, and indirectly proved the source of shame and calamity to his family and nation. See on ch. xiii. **3.** *Chileab*] Called in Chron. *Daniel*, the meaning of which name, "God is my judge," suggests that it may have been given him to commemorate God's judgment upon Nabal (1 Sam. xxv. 39; cp. Gen. xxx. 6). Some suppose that he bore both names, but probably the text of Samuel

Absalom the son of Maacah the daughter of Talmai king of
4 Geshur; and the fourth, Adonijah the son of Haggith; and the
5 fifth, Shephatiah the son of Abital; and the sixth, Ithream,
by Eglah David's wife. These were born to David in Hebron.
6 And it came to pass, while there was war between the house
of Saul and the house of David, that Abner made himself
7 strong for the house of Saul. And Saul had a concubine,
whose name *was* Rizpah, the daughter of Aiah: and *Ish-bosheth*
said to Abner, Wherefore hast thou gone in unto my father's
8 concubine? Then was Abner very wroth for the words of Ish-
bosheth, and said, *Am* I a dog's head, which against Judah do
shew kindness *this* day unto the house of Saul thy father, to
his brethren, and to his friends, and have not delivered thee
into the hand of David, that thou chargest me to day with a

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is corrupt. *Absalom*] Whose name, "*Father of Peace*," was belied by his conduct, the gloomy history of which occupies chaps. xiii.—xviii. of this book. *Maacah the daughter of Talmai king of Geshur*] This marriage with a foreign princess, which was contrary to the spirit of the law (Ex. xxxiv. 16; Deut. vii. 3; Josh. xxiii. 12), and bore such bitter fruit, may have been prompted by political reasons, especially the desirability of securing an ally in the neighbourhood of Ish-bosheth's capital. Talmai's kingdom was a part of Aram or Syria (ch. xv. 8), adjoining the province of Argob in the north-east of Bashan (Deut. iii. 14): probably in the wild and rocky region now called *El-Lejah*. **4.** *Adonijah*] Who made an ill return for his father's indulgence (1 Kings i. 6) by setting up a claim to the throne in opposition to Solomon (1 Kings i. 5 ff.).

5. *Eglah David's wife*] Jewish tradition makes Eglah (=*heifer*, cp. Jud. xiv. 18) another name for *Michal*, who is supposed to be particularly distinguished both here and in 1 Chr. iii. 3 as *David's wife*, because she was his first and best-loved. Polygamy was tolerated by the Mosaic legislation as an existing custom, but discouraged as contrary to the original institution and true ideal of marriage (Deut. xxi. 15—17; xvii. 17; Gen. ii. 24). David's family history illustrates the evils of this practice, which are perpetuated to this day in Oriental countries.

6—11. Quarrel between Abner and Ish-bosheth.

6. R.V. **made himself strong in,** or (marg.), *shewed himself strong for* &c. Abner had made himself the mainstay of Saul's house, but at length, foreseeing the impossibility of continuing a successful opposition to David's growing power, he took the opportunity of a quarrel with Ish-bosheth to make such overtures to David as might secure him favourable terms and an influential position. **7.** *Rizpah*] The heroine of the tragic story related in ch. xxi. 8—11. *Wherefore* &c.] Abner's act was an invasion of royal rights, and consequently implicit treason. Cp. ch. xii. 8, xvi. 21; 1 Kings ii. 22. **8.** R.V. **Am I a dog's head that belongeth to Judah? This day do I shew kindness...and yet thou chargest me this day** &c., i.e. Am I

fault concerning *this* woman? So do God to Abner, and more 9
also, except, as the LORD hath sworn to David, even so I do
to him; to translate the kingdom from the house of Saul, and 10
to set up the throne of David over Israel and over Judah,
from Dan even to Beer-sheba. And he could not answer Abner 11
a word again, because he feared him.

And Abner sent messengers to David on his behalf, saying, 12
Whose *is* the land? saying *also*, Make thy league with me,
and behold, my hand *shall be* with thee, to bring about all
Israel unto thee. And he said, Well; I will make a league 13
with thee: but one thing I rèquire of thee, that is, Thou
shalt not see my face, except thou first bring Michal Saul's
daughter, when thou comest to see my face. And David sent 14
messengers to Ish-bosheth Saul's son, saying, Deliver *me* my
wife Michal, which I espoused to me for an hundred foreskins

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at once despicable and a traitor? Nay, I am faithful to the house of Saul, otherwise I should long ago have made terms with David by surrendering you into his hands. In the East in ancient times as at the present day, dogs, although used for guarding flocks and houses (Job xxx. 1; Is. lvi. 10), were chiefly seen prowling about towns in a half-wild condition, owning no master, living on offal and garbage. Cp. Ps. lix. 14, 15; 1 Kings xxi. 19, 23, 24, xxii. 38. Hence the aversion with which they were regarded, and "dog" became (1), as here, a term of reproach and contempt; cp. 1 Sam. xvii. 43, xxiv. 14; 2 Sam. ix. 8, xvi. 9; 2 Kings viii. 13: (2) an expression for fierce and cruel men (Ps. xxii. 16): (3) a name for impure persons (Matt. vii. 6; Phil. iii. 2; Rev. xxii. 15).

9. R.V. **God do so to Abner...if, as the LORD hath sworn to David, I do not even so to him.** The oath is characteristic of the books of Samuel and Kings. See note on 1 Sam. iii. 17. No express divine *oath* promising the kingdom to David is recorded: but Samuel's solemn declaration to Saul (1 Sam. xv. 28, 29), and his choice and anointing of David by Divine command (1 Sam. xvi. 1—12), were equivalent to it. It seems to have been generally known that David was designated by God to be Saul's successor (1 Sam. xxv. 28—31; 2 Sam. v. 2). Abner knew God's purpose, and yet he resisted it to the best of his power. How much better for Israel and for himself would it have been, if he had loyally acquiesced in it from the first. **10.** *from Dan even to Beer-sheba*] Over the whole land of Israel. See note on 1 Sam. iii. 20. **11.** *a word again*] R.V. **another word.**

12—21. Abner's negotiations with David. **12.** *on his behalf*] Or, as R.V. marg., *where he was. Whose* is *the land*] The meaning may be either (*a*) "Is not the land thine by virtue of God's promise?" or (*b*) "Is not the land in my power so that I can make whom I please king?" But the latter agrees best with the words which follow: "Make thy covenant *with me*," and with Abner's character and evident desire to lay stress on his own power, in order to secure favourable terms for himself.

which I espoused to me] R.V. **whom I betrothed to me,**

15 of the Philistines. And Ish-bosheth sent, and took her from
16 *her* husband, *even* from Phaltiel the son of Laish. And her husband went with her along weeping behind her to Bahurim. Then said Abner unto him, Go, return. And he returned.
17 And Abner had communication with the elders of Israel, saying, Ye sought for David in times past to be king over
18 you: now then do *it:* for the LORD hath spoken of David, saying, By the hand of my servant David I will save my people Israel out of the hand of the Philistines, and out of the hand
19 of all their enemies. And Abner also spake in the ears of Benjamin: and Abner went also to speak in the ears of David in Hebron all that seemed good to Israel, and that seemed
20 *good* to the whole house of Benjamin. So Abner came to David *to* Hebron, and twenty men with him. And David made
21 Abner and the men that *were* with him a feast. And Abner said unto David, I will arise and go, and will gather all Israel unto my lord the king, that they may make a league with thee, and that thou mayest reign over all that thine heart desireth. And David sent Abner away; and he went in peace.
22 And behold, the servants of David and Joab came from *pursuing* a troop, and brought in a great spoil with them: but

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See 1 Sam. xviii. 25, 27. **15. Paltiel** (R.V.) is called *Palti* in 1 Sam. xxv. 44. **16.** R.V. **And her husband went with her, weeping as he went, and followed her to Bahurim.** Bahurim was a village on the road from Jerusalem over the Mount of Olives to the Jordan fords. Comp. xvi. 5, xvii. 18.

17. *with the elders of Israel*] The authorities of the northern tribes as distinct from Judah. The elders were consulted as the representatives of the people. Cp. 1 Sam. viii. 4. *Ye sought* &c.] It appears from this that there had been from the first even among the northern tribes a party favourable to David, as we should naturally expect from his popularity during Saul's reign (1 Sam. xviii. 5). **18.** The commission which had been given to Saul (1 Sam. ix. 16) was transferred to David. Again we have an intimation that prophetic utterances respecting David's divine appointment to the throne were commonly known. **19.** A confidential negotiation was entered into with the tribe of Benjamin, which was the most likely to offer opposition through fear of losing dignity and advantage by the transference of the royal house to the tribe of Judah. **all that seemed good to Israel, and to the whole house of Benjamin** (R.V.) Their readiness to acknowledge David as king, as well as conditions and demands which they wished to make, for there was to be a "covenant" between him and the people (*v.* 21). **21.** *all Israel*] A meeting of the national assembly or "congregation of Israel" was requisite to accept David as king. Cp. ch. v. 1, and note on 1 Sam. x. 17. *a league*] Or, **covenant;** and so in *vv.* 12, 13.

22—27. Abner treacherously murdered by Joab.

22. *from* pursuing *a troop*] R.V. **from a foray,** or plundering

Abner *was* not with David in Hebron; for he had sent him away, and he was gone in peace. When Joab and all the host 23
that *was* with him were come, they told Joab, saying, Abner the son of Ner came to the king, and he hath sent him away, and he is gone in peace. Then Joab came to the king, and 24
said, What hast thou done? behold, Abner came unto thee; why *is* it *that* thou hast sent him away, and he is quite gone? Thou knowest Abner the son of Ner, that he came to deceive 25
thee, and to know thy going out and thy coming in, and to know all that thou doest. And when Joab was come out 26
from David, he sent messengers after Abner, which brought him again from the well of Sirah: but David knew *it* not. And when Abner was returned *to* Hebron, Joab took him 27
aside in the gate to speak with him quietly, and smote him there *under* the fifth *rib*, that he died, for the blood of Asahel his brother.

And afterward when David heard *it*, he said, I and my 28
kingdom *are* guiltless before the LORD for ever from the blood of Abner the son of Ner: let it rest on the head of Joab, and 29
on all his father's house; and let there not fail from the house of Joab one that hath an issue, or that is a leper, or that

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expedition to procure supplies. In the absence of taxes and regular pay, it was the only means of supporting an army. Comp. David's practice at Ziklag (1 Sam. xxvii. 8 ff.). **25.** *thy going out and thy coming in*] All thy movements and undertakings. Cp. Deut. xxviii. 6; Ps. cxxi. 8; Is. xxxvii. 28. **26.** *which brought him again*] R.V. **and they brought him back.** *the well of Sirah*] Rather more than a mile out of Hebron on the old paved road to the north is a spring with a reservoir called *Ain Sareh*, which is in all probability the well or cistern of Sirah. **27.** *in the gate*] R.V. **into the midst of the gate**, the space between the inner and outer gateways. under *the fifth* rib] R.V. **in the belly.** Cp. ii. 23. *for the blood* &c.] Since Abner had slain Asahel in self-defence (ch. ii. 23), Joab's act was not justifiable on the score of blood-revenge. This was merely a convenient pretext for getting rid of a dangerous rival.

28—30. The curse of blood-guiltiness.

28. With a strong asseveration David asserts his innocence of any complicity in this murder. Neither upon himself personally nor upon "his kingdom," i.e. the royal house, his descendants and successors, could punishment for shedding this innocent blood justly fall. Cp. 1 Kings ii. 31—33. For the doctrine of a divine judgment which was certain to fall upon the murderer and his posterity, "visiting the sins of the fathers upon the children," see Gen. iv. 11; Deut. xxi. 6—9; Matt. xxiii. 35. **29.** *let it rest*] R.V. **let it fall.** The Heb. word is a forcible one, used in Jer. xxiii. 19, xxx. 23, of the whirlwind of God's wrath falling upon the head of the wicked. *one that hath an issue, or that is a leper*] Incurable diseases, which not only made life a burden, but ren-

leaneth on a staff, or that falleth on the sword, or that lacketh
30 bread. So Joab and Abishai his brother slew Abner, because
he had slain their brother Asahel at Gibeon in the battle.
31 And David said to Joab, and to all the people that *were*
with him, Rent your clothes, and gird you with sackcloth,
and mourn before Abner. And king David *himself* followed
32 the bier. And they buried Abner in Hebron: and the king
lift up his voice, and wept at the grave of Abner; and all the
33 people wept. And the king lamented over Abner, and said,

Died Abner as a fool dieth?
34 Thy hands *were* not bound,
Nor thy feet put into fetters:
As *a man* falleth before wicked men, *so* fellest thou.

35 And all the people wept again over him. And when all the
people came to cause David to eat meat while it was yet day,
David sware, saying, So do God to me, and more also, if I
36 taste bread, or ought else, till the sun be down. And all the
people took notice *of it*, and it pleased them: as whatsoever
37 the king did, pleased all the people. For all the people and

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dered their victim ceremonially unclean, and excluded him from the congregation of the Lord (Lev. xiii. 46). *that leaneth on a staff*] A cripple, lame, or blind. *on the sword*] R.V., **by the sword.** Untimely death in battle or by the hand of an assassin is meant, not suicide. **30.** *because he had slain*] R.V. **because he had killed.**

31—39. David's lamentation for Abner.

31. *Rent*] An old form of *rend*, which is given in most editions and in R.V. *sackcloth*] The practice of wearing garments of the coarse dark hair-cloth used for making sacks as a sign of mourning was very ancient (Gen. xxxvii. 34). *mourn before Abner*] Preceding the bier in the funeral procession.

33. *lamented*] See on i. 17. **Should Abner die as a fool dieth?** (R.V.) Was this ignoble death, befitting a fool, to be the fate of so brave a warrior? **34.** This difficult verse may mean either (1) Thou hadst not committed any crime to deserve a malefactor's punishment, but wast causelessly murdered by treacherous enemies: or (2) How was it that thou wast slain while thy hands were at liberty to defend thyself, thy feet free to escape by flight? It was because thou wast attacked unsuspectingly by treacherous enemies. In the first case "fool" in *v.* 33 means "miscreant": in the second case it means "an ignoble churl who cannot defend himself." *as a man* &c.] R.V. **As a man falleth before the children of iniquity, so didst thou fall.**

35. Fasting was the usual accompaniment of mourning. To shew his grief and his respect for Abner David refused to eat until sunset, the regular time for terminating a fast. Cp. ch. i. 12; 1 Sam. xxxi. 13. *meat*] R.V. **bread.** In Biblical English *meat* denotes *food* in general, and is never restricted to its modern meaning *flesh*. **37. For all** &c.] R.V. **So all** &c.

all Israel understood that day that it was not of the king to slay Abner the son of Ner. And the king said unto his ser- 38
vants, Know ye not that there is a prince and a great *man* fallen this day in Israel? And I *am this* day weak, though 39
anointed king; and these men the sons of Zeruiah *be* too hard for me: the LORD shall reward the doer of evil according to his wickedness.

And when Saul's son heard that Abner was dead in 4
Hebron, his hands were feeble, and all the Israelites were troubled. And Saul's son had two men *that were* captains 2
of bands: the name of the one *was* Baanah, and the name of the other Rechab, the sons of Rimmon a Beerothite, of the children of Benjamin: (for Beeroth also was reckoned to Benjamin: and the Beerothites fled to Gittaim, and were 3
sojourners there until this day.) And Jonathan, Saul's son, 4

Not only David's own subjects in Judah, but the people of the northern kingdom, who must have been specially indignant, recognised the sincerity of David's grief, and acquitted him of all complicity in the act. **38, 39.** David feels that some apology is needed for leaving the murderers unpunished. He pleads his youth and weakness. Though he had been anointed king, his kingdom was far from being securely established. He could not dispense with his warlike nephews' help. He dared not order the execution of his best general. Probably the army would have interfered to prevent it. But he protests against their hardness and cruelty, and declares that Joab will not escape the divine judgment for his crime. *the LORD shall reward* &c.] R.V. **the LORD reward the wicked doer** &c.

IV. **1—7.** The murder of Ish-bosheth.

1. Here and in *v.* 2, the R.V. follows the Sept. in restoring **Ish-bosheth,** before *Saul's son.* The original name *Esh-baal* was struck out in the Heb. text, to avoid the scandal of pronouncing the name of Baal. See note on ii. 8. *his hands were feeble*] R.V. **became feeble.** His resolution was paralysed: he lost heart. Comp. Ezra iv. 4 and contrast ch. ii. 7. Ish-bosheth was a mere puppet, and Abner the real stay of the kingdom. **2.** *captains of bands*] Leaders of predatory troops. See note on iii. 22. *Benjamin*] Ish-bosheth's murderers belonged to his own tribe.

for Beeroth also is reckoned &c. (R.V.) Beeroth was one of the four Gibeonite cities, retained by their Canaanite inhabitants (Josh. ix. 17). It had however been occupied by Benjamites when they deserted it, probably when Saul massacred the Gibeonites (2 Sam. xxi. 1, 2). Beeroth (=*wells*) now *El-Bireh* (=*the well*), was about 9 miles N. of Jerusalem. **3.** *Gittaim*] Not known; probably not the Benjamite town mentioned in Neh. xi. 33. *were sojourners*] R.V. **have been sojourners.** **4. Now Jonathan** &c. (R.V.). Before narrating the murder of Ish-bosheth, the historian inserts a note to shew that with his death the cause of Saul's house would become hopeless, as its only other legitimate representative was a lame child of twelve years old.

had a son *that was* lame of *his* feet, *and* was five years old when the tidings came of Saul and Jonathan out of Jezreel, and his nurse took him up, and fled: and it came to pass, as she made haste to flee, that he fell, and became lame. And
5 his name *was* Mephibosheth. And the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, Rechab and Baanah, went, and came about the heat of the day to the house of Ish-bosheth, who lay on a
6 bed at noon. And they came thither into the midst of the house, *as though* they would have fetched wheat; and they smote him under the fifth *rib:* and Rechab and Baanah his
7 brother escaped. For when they came *into* the house, he lay on his bed in his bedchamber, and they smote him, and slew him, and beheaded him, and took his head, and gat them away through the plain all night.
8 And they brought the head of Ish-bosheth unto David *to* Hebron, and said to the king, Behold the head of Ish-bosheth

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Jezreel] Where the Israelite camp was pitched before the fatal battle of Gilboa. See note on 1 Sam. xxix. 1. *Mephibosheth*] Called in 1 Chr. viii. 34, ix. 40, *Merib-baal*. *Bosheth* (="shame") has been substituted for the detested name of Baal, as in the name Ish-bosheth for Esh-baal. See note on ch. ii. 8. *Merib-baal* means "one who contends with Baal:" *Mephibosheth*, "exterminator of shame." For his subsequent history see chaps. ix, xvi, xix. 24 ff.

5. *to the house of Ish-bosheth*] At Mahanaim (ch. ii. 8).

who lay on a bed at noon] R.V. **as he took his rest at noon,** according to the usual custom of hot countries. They chose an hour when Ish-bosheth would be alone and defenceless. **6.** An explanation how it was possible for Rechab and Baanah to enter Ish-bosheth's house unsuspected. They came, as they may have been accustomed to do, to procure wheat for their men from the king's granary. The Heb. however may be rendered, as in R.V. marg., *And there came...men fetching wheat*, i. e. men whose business it was to draw the rations of wheat from the granary, in whose company the murderers obtained entrance to the house.

The Sept. however has, *And behold, the woman that kept the door of the house was winnowing wheat, and she slumbered and slept; and the brethren, Rechab and Baanah, went privily into the house* (R.V. marg.). This also explains how the murderers entered unobserved. The female slave who watched the door (cp. John xviii. 16; Acts xii. 13) had fallen asleep over her task of sifting wheat, and there was no one to give the alarm. This reading gives a clear and simple narrative, and seems preferable to the present Hebrew text. *under the fifth rib*] R.V. **in the belly.** See note on ii. 23. **7.** R.V. **Now when they came...as he lay ...they smote him...and went by the way of the Arabah all night,** i. e. by the valley of the Jordan. Comp. ii. 29. From Mahanaim to Hebron was a distance of about 80 or 90 miles.

8—12. The punishment of the murderers by David.

8. *to the king*] Observe that Ish-bosheth is never honoured

the son of Saul thine enemy, which sought thy life; and the LORD hath avenged my lord the king this day of Saul, and of his seed. And David answered Rechab and Baanah his bro- 9
ther, the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, and said unto them, *As* the LORD liveth, who hath redeemed my soul out of all adversity, when one told me, saying, Behold, Saul is dead, 10
thinking to have brought good tidings, I took hold of him, and slew him in Ziklag, who *thought* that I would have given him a reward for *his* tidings: how much more, when wicked 11
men have slain a righteous person in his own house upon his bed? shall I not therefore now require his blood of your hand, and take you away from the earth? And David commanded 12
his young men, and they slew them, and cut off their hands and their feet, and hanged *them* up over the pool in Hebron. But they took the head of Ish-bosheth, and buried *it* in the sepulchre of Abner in Hebron.

Then came all the tribes of Israel to David unto Hebron, 5

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with the title of *king*. *thine enemy, which sought thy life*] Comp. 1 Sam. xxiv. 4, xxv. 29. *the LORD hath avenged*] The murderers profanely represented themselves as the instruments of Providence. **9.** *who hath redeemed* &c.] Comp. 1 Kings i. 29. One who was under God's protection had no need to commit crimes for his own defence. **10.** *when one told me* &c.] The Amalekite who pretended to have slain Saul (ch. i. 2 ff.). *who thought* &c.] R.V. **which was the reward I gave him for his tidings.** The expression is bitterly ironical. 'He expected a reward, and I gave it him; but it was the reward of death.'

11. *a righteous person*] "A man who had done no one any harm," as Josephus says. *require his blood*] Exact satisfaction for his murder. God is said to "require blood," i.e. to avenge murder (Gen. ix. 5; Ps. ix. 12), and in punishing the murderers David acted as His representative. *take you away from the earth*] Or, **put you away out of the land.** The word is one specially used of removing evil or the guilt of evil from the land (Deut. xix. 13, 19, &c.). The guilt of murder defiled the land until expiated by the execution of the murderer (Num. xxxv. 33).

12. The hands which had been stretched out against their master, the feet which had been "swift to shed blood" and to seek reward, were exposed to view in the most public spot in Hebron, for a spectacle and a warning. Compare the practice, formerly in vogue in this country, of exposing the heads and limbs of traitors on the city gates. *over the pool*] R.V. **beside the pool:** possibly one of the two great reservoirs, which are still to be seen at Hebron.

V. **1—5** [*vv.* 1—3 = 1 Chr. xi. 1—3]. David anointed king over all Israel. *all the tribes of Israel*] The 'congregation of Israel,' or national assembly composed of all the warriors of the nation above the age of twenty who chose to come, met to elect David

and spake, saying, Behold, we *are* thy bone and thy flesh.
2 Also in time past, when Saul was king over us, thou wast he
that leddest out and broughtest in Israel: and the LORD said
to thee, Thou shalt feed my people Israel, and thou shalt be a
3 captain over Israel. So all the elders of Israel came to the
king to Hebron; and king David made a league with them in
Hebron before the LORD: and they anointed David king over
4 Israel. David *was* thirty years old when he *began* to reign,
5 *and* he reigned forty years. In Hebron he reigned over Judah
seven years and six months: and in Jerusalem he reigned
thirty and three years over all Israel and Judah.
6 And the king and his men went *to* Jerusalem unto the
Jebusites, the inhabitants of the land: which spake unto

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king. See note on 1 Sam. x. 17. *thy bone and thy flesh*] An expression denoting close relationship in virtue of common descent. Cp. Gen. xxix. 14; Jud. ix. 2. Three reasons are given for electing David king: the tie of relationship: his capacity as a military leader: the divine choice. With the first and third comp. Deut. xvii. 15: with the second comp. ch. iii. 18. **2.** R.V. **In times past,...it was thou that** &c. David had won the good-will of the people as their leader in war. Cp. 1 Sam. xviii. 5, 13, 16.

the LORD said to thee] See note on ch. iii. 9. *Thou shalt feed*] Lit. *thou shalt shepherd*: a natural metaphor to express the ruler's care for his people, and especially appropriate in the case of David, who was taken from the sheepfolds of Beth-lehem to be the shepherd of Israel (Ps. lxxviii. 70—72). *a captain*] R.V. **prince**, marg. *leader*: the title given to Saul in 1 Sam. ix. 16, &c. and to David in 1 Sam. xxv. 30 (A.V. *ruler*). **3.** From *v.* 1 and 1 Chr. xii. 23—40 it is evident that a general assembly of the nation met at Hebron: but the *elders* are specified because they acted as the representatives of the people in negotiating with David. See note on 1 Sam. viii. 4, and cp. ch. iii. 17. *a league*] R.V. **a covenant**. Cp. ch. iii. 21. It was probably a solemn contract in which the king on the one hand engaged to rule according to the laws, and the people on the other hand promised him their allegiance. Some kind of a charter, defining the king's rights, was in existence (1 Sam. x. 25): and later on we find the people demanding some limitation of these rights (1 Kings xii. 3 ff.).

before the LORD] The covenant was made as a solemn religious ceremony, in the presence of the supreme King of Israel, whose vicegerent David was. Cp. 1 Sam. xi. 15. *they anointed David king*] For the third time. See note on ch. ii. 4. The book of Chronicles contains further details about this assembly at Hebron (1 Chr. xii. 23—40). Stress is laid on the unanimity of feeling, and the general rejoicing with which David's anointing was celebrated in a three days' festival. **4, 5.** Cp. 1 Chron. xxix. 27.

6—10 [= 1 Chr. xi. 4—9]. The Capture of Jebus.

6. It is not a little remarkable that the metropolis of the Jewish monarchy, the most sacred city in the world, does not take its

David, saying, Except thou take away the blind and the lame, thou shalt not come in hither: thinking, David cannot come in hither. Nevertheless David took the strong hold of Zion: 7
the same *is* the city of David. And David said on that day, 8
Whosoever getteth up to the gutter, and smiteth the Jebusites, and the lame and the blind, *that are* hated of David's soul, *he*

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place in the history of the nation until a comparatively late period. As the capital of the important Canaanite tribe of the Jebusites, it bore the name of *Jebus*. It was assigned to Benjamin (Josh. xviii. 28), but, lying on the border, was first attacked by Judah (Jud. i. 8), and afterwards by Benjamin (Jud. i. 21). The citadel was either never taken, or soon recovered, for the Jebusites retained joint possession of the city along with the children of Judah and Benjamin through the period of the Judges and down to this time (Josh. xv. 63; Jud. i. 21). Political, civil, and military considerations pointed to Jerusalem as the most suitable capital for the united kingdom. (*a*) Its position within the territory of Benjamin yet close upon the borders of Judah (or partly in one tribe, partly in the other), was excellently adapted for binding together the two royal tribes, and conciliating the good-will of Benjamin, without alienating Judah. (*b*) Its situation was virtually central for the whole land. "It was on the ridge of the backbone of hills, which extend through the whole country from the Desert to the plain of Esdraelon." *Stanley*. (*c*) As a military post it was unrivalled. It stood on a rocky plateau surrounded on three sides by deep ravines forming a natural fortress of almost impregnable strength. *Except* &c.] Render, as R.V. marg., **Thou shalt not come in hither, but the blind and the lame shall turn thee away.** So confident were the Jebusites in the strength of their fortress, that they boasted that a garrison of blind and lame men would be sufficient to defend it. **7.** The ancient site of Jerusalem consisted of three principal hills, to E., N.W., and S.W. Each of these has in turn been supposed to be Zion, the city of David. Most probably it was the one to the S.W.

8. R.V. **Whosoever smiteth the Jebusites, let him get up to the watercourse, and** *smite* **the lame and the blind, that are hated of David's soul.** By *the watercourse* may be meant some gully in the rock, or a subterranean channel which had been constructed to supply the fortress with water. It was the only way by which an entrance could be gained to the citadel. David bids his men give no quarter, taking up the words of the Jebusites, and in derision calling their garrison "blind and lame." The last clause may also be rendered as in R.V. marg., *and as for the lame and the blind, that are hated of David's soul*—; treating the last clause as an aposiopesis, as much as to say, 'let us see what will become of them.' Another reading of the last words is, *that hate David's soul*. The author of the book of Chronicles seems to have omitted an expression which was already obscure. He gives the passage thus: "Whosoever smiteth the Jebusites first shall be chief and captain. So Joab the son of Zeruiah went first

shall be chief and captain. Wherefore they said, The blind
9 and the lame shall not come into the house. So David dwelt
in the fort, and called it the city of David. And David built
10 round about from Millo and inward. And David went on,
and grew great, and the LORD God of hosts *was* with him.
11 And Hiram king of Tyre sent messengers to David, and cedar
trees, and carpenters, and masons: and they built David a
12 house. And David perceived that the LORD had established
him king over Israel, and that he had exalted his kingdom
for his people Israel's sake.
13 And David took *him* mo concubines and wives out of
Jerusalem, after he was come from Hebron: and there were

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up, and was made chief." *Wherefore they said*] R.V. **Wherefore they say:** the regular phrase for introducing a *proverb*. Cp. 1 Sam. xix. 24. *The blind* &c.] R.V. **There are the blind and the lame; he cannot come into the house.** The application of the proverb is obscure; but it may mean that the blind and the lame are sufficient to defend the fortress: he (the assailant) cannot get into it. The A.V. (retained in R.V. marg.) suggests the explanation of the Sept. and Vulg., that the blind and lame were excluded from the Temple. But this does not seem to have been the case, though they were forbidden to minister (Lev. xxi. 18); nor does the explanation take account of the origin of the proverb. **9.** *in the fort*] R.V. **in the strong hold,** the same word as in *v.* 7, and in 1 Chr. xi. 5 (A.V. *castle*). *Millo*] Probably a fortification protecting the city on the N., the only side on which it had not the defence of precipitous ravines. See 1 Kings ix. 15, 24, xi. 27; 2 Chr. xxxii. 5. Millo may have been an old Canaanite name. Comp. Jud. ix. 6, 20. *and inward*] Within or under the protection of the Millo, which was the outermost defence of the city. Chron. adds "And Joab repaired the rest of the city." **10.** R.V. **And David waxed greater and greater; for the LORD, the God of hosts, was with him.** See note on 1 Sam. i. 3.

11—16 [= 1 Chr. xiv. 1—7]. David's Palace and family.

It is probable that the historian to some extent forsakes chronological order, and places the account of David's palace-building and of his family here by anticipation in proof of the statement of *v.* 10. He must have been too fully occupied at the beginning of his reign with the works mentioned in *v.* 9, and with wars such as those against the Philistines (*vv.* 17—25), to have had leisure for palace-building. **11.** *Hiram*] Most likely either the father or the grandfather of Solomon's ally. *Tyre*] One of the two great cities of Phoenicia, celebrated for its commerce, its mechanical skill, and its wealth. When the Israelites entered Canaan, it was already noted for its strength (Josh. xix. 29). Three causes co-operated to bring Phoenicia into close and friendly relation with Israel. (*a*) The contiguity of the countries, and the short distance between their capitals. From Tyre to Jerusalem by land was scarcely more than

yet sons and daughters born to David. And these *be* the 14
names of those that were born unto him in Jerusalem; Sham-
mua, and Shobab, and Nathan, and Solomon, Ibhar also, and 15
Elishua, and Nepheg, and Japhia, and Elishama, and Eliada, 16
and Eliphalet.

But when the Philistines heard that they had anointed 17
David king over Israel, all the Philistines came up to seek
David; and David heard *of it*, and went down to the hold.
The Philistines also came and spread themselves in the valley 18

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100 miles. (*b*) Similarity of language. Phoenician so closely resembled Hebrew, that it must have been readily intelligible to the Israelites. (*c*) Tyre depended upon Palestine for its supplies of wheat and oil, and in return sent to Jerusalem its articles of commerce, and provided skilled workmen for the buildings erected by David and Solomon. *cedar trees*] Felled no doubt in the forests of Lebanon, and brought by sea to Joppa. Cp. 2 Chron. ii. 16. The timber was highly prized for building on account of its durability. Other species of pine besides the well-known cedar of Lebanon were probably included under the general term *cedar*.

13. *Mo* as the comparative of *many* is an archaism which has disappeared from modern editions of the Bible. It occurs frequently in Shakespeare, e.g. *Richard II.*, A. II. S. I. 239, "Many *moe* of noble blood." **14.** The list of David's sons is given again in 1 Chr. iii. 5—8, as well as in 1 Chr. xiv. 4—7. The first four were sons of Bath-sheba, and as Solomon is always placed last it is natural to suppose that he was the youngest. See note on ch. xii. 24. In 1 Chr. iii. Shammua is called *Shimea*, and Elishua appears as *Elishama*, probably by a scribe's error. Both lists in Chron. insert two more names, *Eliphelet* or *Elpelet* and *Nogah*. It is possible that they are omitted here because they died in infancy, and that the second Eliphelet was named after his dead brother. *Beeliada* in 1 Chr. xiv. is another form for *Eliada*, compounded with *Baal* (= lord) instead of *El* (= God). Nothing is known of any of these sons except Solomon and Nathan. It was through the latter that Joseph traced his lineal descent from David, according to the genealogy of our Lord given by St Luke (iii. 31).

17—25 [=1 Chr. xiv. 8—16]. Two victories over the Philistines. **17.** This Philistine invasion probably followed soon after the capture of Jebus. *came up*] From the plains of Philistia to the highlands of Judah. *the hold*] Probably his old post at Adullam. It was a strong position in the valley of Elah, one of the most likely routes for an invading army from Philistia to take. **18. Now the Philistines had come** (R.V.). Taking a different route, perhaps by the *Wady-es-Surâr* and Beth-shemesh (see note on 1 Sam. vi. 9), they came up and occupied **the vale of Rephaim,** an open plain or upland valley, stretching in a S.W. direction from the neighbourhood of Jerusalem towards Beth-lehem. Cp. Josh. xv. 8, xviii. 16 (R.V.). It was named after the ancient gigantic race of the Rephaim (Deut. iii. 11; Gen.

19 of Rephaim. And David inquired of the LORD, saying, Shall
I go up to the Philistines? wilt thou deliver them into mine
hand? And the LORD said unto David, Go up: for I will
20 doubtless deliver the Philistines into thine hand. And David
came to Baal-perazim, and David smote them there, and said,
The LORD hath broken forth upon mine enemies before me, as
the breach of waters. Therefore he called the name of that
21 place Baal-perazim. And there they left their images, and
22 David and his men burnt them. And the Philistines came up
yet again, and spread themselves in the valley of Rephaim.
23 And when David inquired of the LORD, he said, Thou shalt
not go up; *but* fetch a compass behind them, and come upon
24 them over against the mulberry trees. And let it be, when
thou hearest the sound of a going in the tops of the mul-
berry trees, *that* then thou shalt bestir thyself: for then shall
the LORD go out before thee, to smite the host of the Philis-
25 tines. And David did so, as the LORD had commanded him; and
smote the Philistines from Geba until thou come *to* Gazer.

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xiv. 5; Josh. xvii. 15). **19.** *inquired*] See note on ch. ii. 1. R.V. **Shall I go up against the P.?** **20.** *hath broken forth upon &c.*] Or, as R.V., **hath broken...like the breach** &c. Isaiah calls the scene of the battle "*mount* Perazim" (xxviii. 21). David, we may suppose, occupied the hill, and swept down from it upon the Philistines in the plain below, scattering them as a mountain torrent swollen by a sudden storm sweeps all before it and bursts through every obstacle in its way. *Baal-perazim*] i.e. *the place of breakings forth.* **21.** *their images*] Cp. 1 Sam. xxxi. 9 (A.V. *idols*). They brought them into the field to ensure victory, as the Edomites appear to have done (2 Chr. xxv. 14), and as the Israelites brought out the Ark (1 Sam. iv. 3). *burnt them*] The Heb. has, **took them away,** as spoil, perhaps to display in the triumphal procession. According to 1 Chr. xiv. 12 he afterwards burnt them, in compliance with the law of Deut. vii. 5, 25. Thus the old disgrace of the capture of the Ark by the Philistines was avenged. **23.** *Thou shalt not go up*] i.e. as the Sept. adds, *to meet them*, attacking them directly in front. *fetch a compass*] i.e. as R.V. **make a circuit.** Go round to their rear. *mulberry trees*] Or, as R.V. marg., *balsam trees.* **24.** *the sound of a going*] R.V. **the sound of marching.** The cognate verb is used of Jehovah "marching" (so to speak) before His people in Jud. v. 4; Ps. lxviii. 7; Hab. iii. 12. A rustling in the tops of the trees like the marching of an army was to be the signal that Jehovah Himself would lead David's army to victory. Cp. 2 Kings vii. 6. **For then is the LORD gone out before thee** (R.V.). The use of the perfect tense in the original gives emphasis to the assurance. **25.** *Geba*] The Sept., 1 Chron. xiv. 16, and Is. xxviii. 21, all read **Gibeon.** This seems to be the true reading. Geba was too far to the east: Gibeon (see on ch. ii. 12) was on the natural line of retreat northwards from the

Again, David gathered together all the chosen *men* of Israel, 6
thirty thousand. And David arose, and went with all the 2
people that *were* with him from Baale of Judah, to bring up
from thence the ark of God, whose name is called *by* the
name of the LORD of hosts that dwelleth *between* the cherub-
ims. And they set the ark of God upon a new cart, and 3

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vale of Rephaim to Gezer. **Gezer** (R.V.) was a royal city of the Canaanites (Josh. xii. 12, xxi. 21). It lay between the lower Beth-horon and the sea (Josh. xvi. 3), and the name appears to survive in *Tell-Jezar*, a hill about 10 miles W.S.W. of Beth-horon. The Philistines were thus driven right back into their own lowland plain.

VI. **1—23** [= 1 Chr. xiii, xv, xvi]. The Translation of the Ark to Mount Zion. This chapter records an important episode in David's reign. After restoring the political unity of the nation, and consolidating it by the establishment of his new capital, his next care was to make that capital the centre of the national worship. With this object he prepared to convey thither the Ark, which had been left neglected at Kiriath-jearim since its return from Philistia (1 Chr. xiii. 3). Psalms ci, xv, lxviii, xxiv, cxxxii, should be studied as illustrating and supplementing the history.

1—11. Removal of the Ark from Kiriath-jearim. Uzzah smitten for his irreverence. **1. And David again gathered together** (R.V.). "Again" refers either to the assembly convened for David's coronation (ch. v. 1—3), or to the muster for the Philistine war (ch. v. 17—25). A more elaborate account of David's preparations for this ceremony is given in 1 Chr. xiii. 1—5. The Chronicler's object in writing leads him to give special attention to details of religious organization, where the writer of Samuel is content to condense his account into a single sentence. See Introd. p. 9. *thirty thousand*] Probably only the "captains of thousands and hundreds and every leader" mentioned in 1 Chr. xiii. 1. A general assembly of the people would have been much more numerous. **2.** *from Baale of Judah*] **Baale Judah** (R.V.) is generally supposed to be another name for *Kiriath-jearim*, which is called *Baalah* in Josh. xv. 9; 1 Chr. xiii. 6, and Kiriath-Baal in Josh. xv. 60. Here the Ark had remained since its return from the country of the Philistines (1 Sam. vii. 1, 2). If the preposition "*from*" is correct, we must assume that the narrator passes over the journey to Kiriath-jearim, and speaks of the return only: but this seems improbable, and most commentators emend the text in accordance with 1 Chr. xiii. 6, and read "**to.**" *whose name &c.*] R.V. **which is called by the Name, even the name of the LORD of hosts that sitteth upon the cherubim.** Cp. Deut. xxviii. 10; 1 Kings viii. 43. The Ark is specially said to be "called by the name of Jehovah of Hosts," because it was the symbol of the covenant between Jehovah and Israel, and because it was the place where He chiefly chose to manifest Himself by visible tokens to His people. See notes on 1 Sam. iv. 4, 21; and for the meaning of the title "Jehovah of Hosts" see note on 1 Sam. i. 3. **3.** *a new*

brought it out of the house of Abinadab that *was* in Gibeah:
and Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of Abinadab, drave the new
4 cart. And they brought it out of the house of Abinadab
which *was* at Gibeah, accompanying the ark of God: and
5 Ahio went before the ark. And David and all the house of
Israel played before the LORD on all *manner of instruments*
made of fir wood, even on harps, and on psalteries, and on
6 timbrels, and on cornets, and on cymbals. And when they
came to Nachon's threshingfloor, Uzzah put forth *his hand* to
the ark of God, and took hold of it; for the oxen shook *it.*
7 And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Uzzah; and
God smote him there for *his* error; and there he died by the

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cart] Not desecrated by common uses. Cp. 1 Sam. vi. 7. The Levitical law however prescribed that the Ark should be carried by the Levites (Num. iii. 29—31, vii. 9). *in Gibeah*] R.V. **in the hill.** Comp. 1 Sam. vii. 1. Some eminence in or near Kiriath-jearim is meant. *Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of Abinadab*] The Ark had been in the house of Abinadab for seventy or eighty years—twenty during the Philistine oppression, forty or fifty under Samuel and Saul, and perhaps ten of David's reign. As Eleazar the son of Abinadab was old enough to be entrusted with the charge of the Ark when it was placed in his father's house, we must understand "sons" here in the wider sense of grandsons or great-grandsons. Comp. ch. ix. 9. **4.** R.V. **And they brought it out of the house of Abinadab, which was in the hill, with the ark of God.** **5.** *played*] The word denotes a dance accompanied by music, such as frequently formed part of a religious festival. Cp. 1 Sam. xviii. 7. *on all* manner of instruments made of *fir-wood*] R.V. **with all manner** &c. But the expression is a strange one, and the reading in 1 Chron. xiii. 8, **with all their might: even with songs,** may be right. *even on harps* &c.] R.V. **and with harps** &c. The harp and psaltery were stringed instruments, the timbrel was a tambourine or hand drum. For *cornets* R.V. has **castanets,** marg. *sistra.* It was probably an instrument similar to the Egyptian sistrum, which consisted of rings hung loosely on iron rods, so as to make a tinkling sound when shaken. Cymbals were plates of metal, held in each hand, and played by being clashed together. **6. The threshing-floor of Nacon** (R.V.) is called in 1 Chr. xiii. 9, the threshing-floor of *Chidon.* It may have been known by both names, but more probably one of the two forms is due to corruption of the text. *shook* it] R.V. **stumbled;** with marg. alternatives, *were restive*, or, *threw* it *down.* The Ark seemed to be on the point of falling from the cart, owing to some start or stumble of the oxen, or the roughness of the road. **7.** *for* his *error*] Or as in the margin, *for his rashness.* As before at Beth-shemesh (1 Sam. vi. 19), an act of irreverence towards the Ark was punished with death. Such a penalty for a well-meant and natural action seems to us at first sight strangely severe. But it must be remem-

ark of God. And David was displeased, because the LORD 8
had made a breach upon Uzzah: and he called *the name* of
the place Perez-uzzah to this day. And David was afraid of 9
the LORD that day, and said, How shall the ark of the LORD
come to me? So David would not remove the ark of the 10
LORD unto him into the city of David: but David carried it
aside *into* the house of Obed-edom the Gittite. And the ark 11
of the LORD continued *in* the house of Obed-edom the Gittite
three months: and the LORD blessed Obed-edom, and all his
household.

And it was told king David, saying, The LORD hath blessed 12
the house of Obed-edom, and all that *pertaineth* unto him,
because of the ark of God. So David went and brought up
the ark of God from the house of Obed-edom *into* the city of
David with gladness. And it was *so*, that when they that bare 13
the ark of the LORD had gone six paces, he sacrificed oxen

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bered that one of the great lessons which the nation of Israel had to learn was the unapproachable Majesty of the holy God. The Ark was the symbol of His presence, and the Levitical ordinances were designed to secure the strictest reverence for it (Num. iv. 5, 15, 19, 20). The occasion was an important one. It was the first step in the inauguration of a new era of worship, in the newly established capital of the kingdom; and if these breaches of the divine ordinances had been left unpunished, the lessons they were intended to teach might have been neglected. Uzzah's death was necessary for a solemn warning to David and the people. For the lesson conveyed to us see Heb. x. 28, 29. **8.** *was displeased*] The same word is used in 1 Sam. xv. 11 (A.V. *it grieved Samuel*) to denote vexation akin to anger. *made a breach*] R.V. **had broken forth:** the same verb as in ch. v. 20: used in a precisely similar sense of a sudden divine judgment in Ex. xix. 22, 24. *Perez-uzzah* means *the breach of Uzzah*. **10.** *Obed-edom the Gittite*] Obed-edom was a Levite belonging to the family of the Korahites, who were descended from Kohath (1 Chron. xxvi. 1, 4—8; Num. xvi. 1). He is called a Gittite probably because he was a native of the Levitical city of Gath-rimmon, which was assigned to the Kohathites (Josh. xxi. 24, 25). Thus there was an appropriateness in his being chosen to take charge of the Ark, since he belonged to the family which was originally appointed to carry it from place to place (Num. iv. 15).

12—19. Removal of the Ark from the house of Obed-edom to Jerusalem. **12.** *with gladness*] R.V. **with joy:** i.e. festal rejoicings: jubilant shouts and songs. **13.** *they that bare the ark of the LORD*] The requirements of the law were now duly observed. *had gone six paces*] As soon as the procession had started on its way David offered a sacrifice as a thank-offering for the prosperous commencement, and an intercession for the successful completion, of his undertaking. *oxen and fatlings*] R.V. **an ox and a fatling.** But the A.V. is equally justifiable.

14 and fatlings. And David danced before the LORD with all *his*
15 might; and David *was* girded *with* a linen ephod. So David
and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of the LORD
16 with shouting, and with the sound of the trumpet. And as
the ark of the LORD came *into* the city of David, Michal Saul's
daughter looked through a window, and saw king David leaping and dancing before the LORD; and she despised him in her
17 heart. And they brought in the ark of the LORD, and set it
in his place, in the midst of the tabernacle that David had
pitched for it: and David offered burnt offerings and peace
18 offerings before the LORD. And as soon as David had made
an end of offering burnt offerings and peace offerings, he
19 blessed the people in the name of the LORD of hosts. And
he dealt among all the people, *even* among the whole multitude
of Israel, as well to the women as men, to every one a cake of
bread, and a good piece *of flesh*, and a flagon *of wine*. So all
the people departed every one to his house.
20 Then David returned to bless his household. And Michal
the daughter of Saul came out to meet David, and said, How

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14. The dances which were the usual expression of rejoicing on occasions of national thanksgiving (Ex. xv. 20, 21; Jud. xi. 34) and religious festivals (Ps. cxlix. 3, cl. 4) were generally performed by women only. But David's enthusiasm did not fear to transgress the limits of conventional propriety. *before the* LORD] For the Ark was the symbol of Jehovah's presence. *a linen ephod*] David laid aside his royal robes and appeared in the dress of a priest. As the head of "a kingdom of priests" (Ex. xix. 6), the king possessed a priestly character; and David on this occasion exercised priestly functions in directing the sacrifices, even if he did not offer them himself (*vv.* 17, 18), and in blessing the people (*v.* 18). See Introd. p. 15. **16.** *she despised him*] The proud daughter of the house of Saul was incapable of appreciating the honour of humility. **17.** *in his place*] i.e. as R.V., **in its place.** *the tabernacle*] R.V., **the tent**, as in 1 Chr. xv. 1. The Tabernacle was at Gibeon (1 Chr. xvi. 39). **18.** R.V. **the burnt offering and the peace offerings:** the one dedicatory, the other eucharistic. The latter furnished the festival meal for the assembled people (Lev. vii. 15). Comp. Solomon's sacrifices at the dedication of the Temple (1 Kings viii. 62—65).

he blessed &c.] As Solomon did (1 Kings viii. 14, 55). "The name of the LORD" signifies "Jehovah as He has revealed Himself to men," and "to bless in the name of the LORD" signifies 'to invoke from Jehovah such blessings as He covenants to give in accordance with His revelation of Himself.' Cp. Ps. cxxix. 8.

19. *dealt*] In the old sense of *divided* or *distributed*, from Anglo-Saxon *dælan*, to distribute, from which comes *dole*, a portion *dealt* out. *a good piece* of flesh] R.V. **a portion** *of flesh*, or (marg.), *of wine*. *a flagon of wine*] R.V. **a cake of raisins.**

20—23. Michal's contemptuous pride rebuked by David.

glorious was the king of Israel to day, who uncovered himself
to day in the eyes of the handmaids of his servants, as one of
the vain *fellows* shamelessly uncovereth himself! And David 21
said unto Michal, *It was* before the LORD, which chose me
before thy father, and before all his house, to appoint me ruler
over the people of the LORD, over Israel: therefore will I play
before the LORD. And I will yet be more vile than thus, and 22
will be base in mine own sight: and of the maidservants which
thou hast spoken of, of them shall I be had in honour. There- 23
fore Michal the daughter of Saul had no child unto the day
of her death.

And it came to pass, when the king sat in his house, and 7
the LORD had given him rest round about from all his enemies;
that the king said unto Nathan the prophet, See now, I dwell 2

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20. *How glorious* &c.] Better, **How honourable did the king of Israel make himself to-day.** The A.V. weakens the point of David's answer in *v.* 22 by translating the same Hebrew word differently in the two verses. *who uncovered himself* &c.] Stripped off his royal robe, and appeared in a plain ephod, as a worthless buffoon strips off his outer garment to play immodest antics. *vain*] = 'empty,' 'worthless.'

21. R.V. **which chose me above thy father, and above all his house, to appoint me prince** &c. No service offered to the God to whom he owed all his advancement could be degrading. **22.** Michal had taunted David with degrading himself in the eyes of the meanest servants. He replies that even if he humbled himself yet more deeply, instead of priding himself on his royal dignity, they would continue to honour him. *and of the maidservants*] R.V. **but of the handmaids.** **23. And Michal** &c. (R.V.). She was condemned to the reproach of childlessness, the sharpest privation to an Oriental woman. Cp. Gen. xxx. 1; 1 Sam. i. 5.

VII. **1—29** [= 1 Chr. xvii. Cp. Ps. lxxxix. 19—37]. The promise of perpetual dominion to the house of David.

1—3. David's desire to build a house for the Lord. **1.** R.V. **when the king dwelt in his house,** which he had built (ch. v. 9, 11; 1 Chr. xiv. 1). At what period of his reign David formed this resolution to build a temple cannot be exactly determined. On the one hand the words "when the LORD had given him rest round about from all his enemies" (cp. *v.* 9) point to a time after some at least of the wars recorded in ch. viii. On the other hand it was before the birth of Solomon (*v.* 12). The arrangement of the book is not strictly chronological, and this narrative finds a suitable place here from its connexion with the subject of the preceding chapter. **2.** *Nathan the prophet*] The first mention of one of the most eminent men in the reigns of David and Solomon. It was he who rebuked David for his sin with Bath-sheba (ch. xii. 1 ff.); who became Solomon's tutor, and took a leading part in securing his succession to the throne (1 Kings i. 22 ff.); who wrote a

in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwelleth within curtains. 3 And Nathan said to the king, Go, do all that *is* in thine heart; for the LORD *is* with thee.

4 And it came to pass that night, that the word of the LORD came unto Nathan, saying, 5 Go and tell my servant David, Thus saith the LORD, Shalt thou build me a house for me to dwell

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history of the reign of David and of part at least of the reign of Solomon (1 Chr. xxix. 29; 2 Chr. ix. 29), from which in all probability a large portion of the books of Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles, is derived. *curtains*] The term applied in Ex. xxvi. 1 ff., xxxvi. 8 ff., to the coverings of the tabernacle.

4—17. The Lord's Message to David. Nathan's prophecy marks an important stage in the Old Testament revelation which prepared the way for the Messiah's coming. By it God declared His choice of the house of David, and promises it an everlasting kingdom. But it does not speak of the Messiah as an individual; it does not predict the perfect reign of a sinless king. It contemplates a succession of kings of David's line, who would be liable to fall into sin and would need the discipline of chastisement. The perfect king in whom, as we now know, the line was to culminate, and the prophecy receive its highest fulfilment, is not yet foretold. It remained for prophet and psalmist, developing this fundamental revelation, to draw the picture of the ideal king who should spring from David's seed, and exercise dominion as the true representative of Jehovah on earth. As each human heir of David's line failed to fulfil the expectation, hope was carried forward and elevated, until He came to Whom is given the throne of His father David, and of Whose kingdom there shall be no end (Luke i. 32, 33). The subsequent references to this great promise should be carefully studied. David applies it to Solomon (1 Chr. xxii. 9, 10, xxviii. 2 ff.). Solomon claims it for himself (1 Kings v. 5; 2 Chr. vi. 7 ff.; 1 Kings viii. 17—20). It is confirmed to Solomon (1 Kings ix. 4, 5). It is repeatedly affirmed, that in spite of the sin of individual kings, the kingdom shall not be withdrawn from David's house for his sake (1 Kings xi. 31—39, xv. 4, 5; 2 Kings viii. 18, 19). Ps. lxxxix., written in the dark days when the monarchy was already tottering to its fall, recapitulates this promise, and pleads with God that He would not suffer it to be frustrated. See especially *vv.* 19—37. Ps. cxxxii. 11, 12, and Is. lv. 3, also contain distinct references to it.

The connexion of thought in *vv.* 5—13 is as follows: "*Thou* shalt not build an house for *Me* (5—7), but *I*, who have chosen thee to be the ruler of my people, will build an house *for thee* (8—11), and thy son shall erect an house for ME" (12, 13). **4.** Observe the clear distinction between Nathan's own judgment, which approved David's resolution, and the divine message which he was commissioned to deliver to David. **5.** *my servant David*] Any Israelite might call himself God's servant in addressing God: but only a few who were raised up to do special service, such as Moses and Joshua, are honoured by being thus distinctively styled "Servants of Jehovah." See Introd. p. 16. *Shalt thou build*]

in? Whereas I have not dwelt in *any* house since the time that 6
I brought up the children of Israel out of Egypt, even to this
day, but have walked in a tent and in a tabernacle. In all *the* 7
places wherein I have walked with all the children of Israel
spake I a word with any of the tribes of Israel, whom I com-
manded to feed my people Israel, saying, Why build ye not me
a house of cedar? Now therefore so shalt thou say unto my 8
servant David, Thus saith the LORD of hosts, I took thee from
the sheepcote, from following the sheep, to be ruler over my
people, over Israel: and I was with thee whithersoever thou 9
wentest, and have cut off all thine enemies out of thy sight,
and have made thee a great name, like unto the name of the
great *men* that *are* in the earth. Moreover I will appoint a 10
place for my people Israel, and will plant them, that they
may dwell in a place of their own, and move no more; neither
shall the children of wickedness afflict them any more, as
beforetime, and *as* since the time that I commanded judges *to* 11
be over my people Israel, and have caused thee to rest from
all thine enemies. Also the LORD telleth thee that he will
make thee a house. And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou 12
shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee,

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Thou is emphatic. The question of course is equivalent to a negative. **6.** R.V. **For I have not dwelt in an house** &c.

7. *with any of the tribes of Israel*] 1 Chr. xvii. 6 reads *judges* for *tribes*, and at first sight this appears to be required by the words "whom I commanded" &c. But "tribes" may be understood of the different tribes which through the Judges and leaders chosen from them successively attained the supremacy, as Ephraim in the time of Joshua, Dan in the days of Samson, Benjamin in the reign of Saul. *to feed*] As a shepherd tends his sheep. See note on ch. v. 2. *Why* &c.] R.V. **Why have ye not built me** &c. *a house of cedar*] Cp. *v.* 2. A permanent sanctuary with beams of costly timber. See on ch. v. 11.

8. *the sheepcote*] Or, as R.V. marg., *from the pasture*. Cp. Ps. lxxviii. 70, 71. *to be ruler*] R.V. **that thou shouldest be prince.** Cp. ch. v. 2, vi. 21. **9.** R.V. **and I have been with thee...and I will make thee a great name** &c.

10. For the metaphor of *planting*, comp. Ex. xv. 17; Ps. xliv. 2. *that* &c.] R.V. **that they may dwell in their own place, and be moved no more.** *the children of wickedness*] = wicked men. Cp. ch. iii. 34 (R.V.); Ps. lxxxix. 22. **10, 11.** *as beforetime* &c.] R.V. **as at the first, and** *as* **from the day that** &c.: referring to the beginning of the nation's history in Egypt, and to the various oppressions they had suffered from the beginning of the period of the Judges down to the present. *and have caused thee to rest*] Or, as R.V., **and I will cause thee to rest. 12.** *And when*] R.V. omits *And*. The promise of the preceding verse is now more fully set forth. *thy seed*] First Solomon, who recognises the fulfilment of this promise in his eleva-

which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish
13 his kingdom. He shall build a house for my name, and I
14 will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever. I will be
his father, and he shall be my son. If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the
15 stripes of the children of men: but my mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took *it* from Saul, whom I put
16 away before thee. And thine house and thy kingdom shall be stablished for ever before thee: thy throne shall be stablished
17 for ever. According to all these words, and according to all this vision, so did Nathan speak unto David.

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tion to the throne (1 Kings viii. 15—20); then the line of David's descendants who succeeded him on the throne of Judah; and finally Christ, in whom the prophecy reaches its highest fulfilment. See Luke i. 31—33; Acts ii. 29—31, xiii. 22, 23. **13.** *for my name*] The Name of God signifies God Himself so far as He has revealed and manifested Himself to men. His promise concerning the Temple was that He would "put His name there," that is, that He would be present and reveal Himself there in an especial manner. See 1 Kings viii. 29, ix. 3. *stablish*] i.e. as R.V. **establish.** **14.** The nation of Israel is called "Jehovah's son" (Ex. iv. 22; Deut. xiv. 1; Hos. xi. 1); and the king, as the representative of the nation, enjoys the same distinction. This relationship implies, on the part of God, the watchful care and love of a parent; on the part of the king, the duty of loyal trust and willing obedience. Cp. Ps. lxxxix. 26, 27, where similar expressions are applied to David; Ps. ii. 7; and 1 Chr. xxii. 9, 10, xxviii. 6, where David quotes this promise in reference to Solomon. It finds its highest fulfilment in the mysterious eternal relationship between God the Father and Christ the Son, with reference to which these words are quoted in Heb. i. 5. See Introd. p. 15. *If he commit &c.*] A warning that this high dignity will not exempt him from the danger of sin nor from its punishment. He will be chastised, if need be, as men chastise their children to correct and reclaim them. Cp. Ps. lxxxix. 30—33, and 1 Kings xi. 34—36, 39. **16.** *thy kingdom shall be established*] R.V. **thy kingdom shall be made sure.** The word is that rendered in 1 Sam. ii. 35, "a *sure* house," and in Is. lv. 3, "the *sure* mercies of David." *before thee*] The explanation that David is regarded as seeing all his descendants pass before him in a vision, is forced, and it is best to follow the Sept. in reading **before me.** Comp. *vv.* 26 and 29. **17.** *this vision*] God's message was communicated to Nathan by "a vision," in which his spiritual sight was quickened to discern the truth.

18—29. David's prayer and thanksgiving. David's address to God consists of (*a*) humble thanksgiving for the undeserved favour shewn to him and his house, *vv.* 18—21; (*b*) praise for God's past manifestations of His glory in and to Israel, *vv.* 22—24; (*c*) petition

Then went king David in, and sat before the LORD, and he 18
said, Who *am* I, O Lord GOD? and what *is* my house, that
thou hast brought me hitherto? And this was yet a small 19
thing in thy sight, O Lord GOD; but thou hast spoken also
of thy servant's house for a great while to come. And *is*
this the manner of man, O Lord GOD? And what can David 20
say more unto thee? for thou, Lord GOD, knowest thy servant.
For thy word's sake, and according to thine own heart, hast 21
thou done all these great things, to make thy servant know
them. Wherefore thou art great, O LORD God: for *there is* 22
none like thee, neither *is there any* God beside thee, according
to all that we have heard with our ears. And what one nation 23
in the earth *is* like thy people, *even* like Israel, whom God

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for the final fulfilment of the promise, *vv.* 25—29. **18. Then David the king went in** (R.V.), to the tent where the Ark, the symbol of God's presence, was. *Who* am *I* &c.] Comp. Jacob's language in Gen. xxxii. 10. *O Lord GOD*] Whenever GOD is thus printed in small capitals, it represents the sacred name JEHOVAH. From very ancient times the Jewish practice in reading the Scriptures has been to substitute in place of Jehovah *Adônai*, which means *Lord;* or if the title Adônai is joined with Jehovah, as here, *Elôhîm*, which means *God.* The A.V. follows the Jewish practice in giving LORD and GOD, but whenever they represent the name Jehovah indicates the fact by the use of capitals. "Lord GOD," which represents "Lord Jehovah," must therefore be distinguished from "LORD God" (*v.* 25), which represents "Jehovah Elohim," i.e. "Jehovah God." *hitherto*] R.V. **thus far.** **19.** *And* is *this* &c.] An obscure phrase. (1) R.V. renders: **and this** *too* **after the manner of men, O Lord GOD!** speaking thus familiarly and condescendingly. (2) R.V. marg. has: *and is this the law of man, O Lord GOD?* Is this decree that my kingdom shall be established for ever to be valid for weak human beings, such as myself and my posterity! An expression of humble astonishment at the greatness of the honour destined for him and his house. (3) The reading in 1 Chr. xvii. 17 is different: "thou hast regarded me according to the estate of a man of high degree." **20.** *thou, Lord GOD* &c.] Words fail, and David appeals to God's omniscience. Comp. Ps. xvii. 3, cxxxix. 1—4; John xxi. 17. **21.** *For thy word's sake*] To fulfil Thy promises made to me through Samuel. *hast thou done* &c.] R.V. **hast thou wrought all this greatness, to make thy servant know it.** **22.** Since Thou hast done these great things for me, I praise Thee and acknowledge Thy greatness. Comp. Ps. xxxv. 27, xl. 16, xlviii. 1. *for* there is *none like thee* &c.] Comp. Ex. xv. 11; Deut. iii. 24, iv. 35; 1 Sam. ii. 2. *according to all* &c.] God's dealings with Israel were handed down from father to son by oral tradition. Comp. Ex. x. 2; Deut. iv. 9; Ps. xliv. 1, lxxxvi. 8—10. **23.** *And what* &c.] Comp. Deut. iv. 7, 32—38. The clause may also be rendered as in R.V. marg. *And who is like thy people, like Israel, a nation that is alone in the earth* &c. Cp. Num. xxiii. 9; Deut. xxxiii. 28.

went to redeem for a people to himself, and to make him a name, and to do for you great things and terrible, for thy land, before thy people, which thou redeemedst to thee from
24 Egypt, *from* the nations and their gods? For thou hast confirmed to thyself thy people Israel to be a people unto thee
25 for ever; and thou, LORD, art become their God. And now, O LORD God, the word that thou hast spoken concerning thy servant, and concerning his house, establish *it* for ever, and
26 do as thou hast said. And let thy name be magnified for ever, saying, The LORD of hosts *is* the God over Israel: and let the
27 house of thy servant David be established before thee. For thou, O LORD of hosts, God of Israel, hast revealed to thy servant, saying, I will build thee a house: therefore hath thy servant
28 found in his heart to pray this prayer unto thee. And now, O Lord GOD, thou *art* that God, and thy words be true, and
29 thou hast promised this goodness unto thy servant: therefore now let it please thee to bless the house of thy servant, that *it* may continue for ever before thee: for thou, O Lord GOD, hast spoken *it:* and with thy blessing let the house of thy servant be blessed for ever.

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whom God went &c.] Where can any nation be found, which has been delivered as Israel was delivered from Egypt by Jehovah? *and to do* &c.] R.V. **and to do great things for you, and terrible things for thy land.** But *you* can only refer to Israel, and an address to the people is quite out of place in David's prayer to God. It is best to emend the text by the help of the Sept. and 1 Chr. xvii. 21, and read the close of the verse thus; *and to do great things and terrible, to drive out nations and their gods before thy people, which thou redeemedst for thyself out of Egypt.* *great things and terrible*] The miracles of the Exodus, the journey through the wilderness, the Entry into Canaan. Comp. Deut. x. 21 for the phrase. **24.** R.V. **And thou didst establish;** it is the same word as in *v.* 13. Comp. Deut. xxxii. 6. *art become*] R.V. **becamest:** didst prove Thyself to be their God, in fulfilment of the promises in Gen. xvii. 7, 8; Ex. vi. 7. **25.** *establish* &c.] R.V. **confirm thou it for ever, and do as thou hast spoken.** **26.** *let the house* &c.] R.V. **the house of thy servant David shall be established;** an expression of confident assurance, the ground of which is introduced by the "for" of *v.* 27. **27.** *therefore*] The promise justified a prayer which otherwise would have seemed presumptuous. *found in his heart*] Or, as R.V. marg., *been bold.* **28.** *thou* art *that God*] R.V. **thou art God, and thy words are truth.** Truth is an essential attribute of God, and His promises must therefore prove true. Comp. Ex. xxxiv. 6; Ps. xix. 9; John xvii. 17. *this goodness*] R.V. **this good thing.**

VIII. [=1 Chr. xviii.]. The Development of David's Kingdom. This chapter contains a summary account of the wars by which David established the supremacy of Israel among the surrounding nations. At what periods of his reign they were waged is not stated.

And after this it came to pass, that David smote the 8
Philistines, and subdued them: and David took Metheg-
ammah out of the hand of the Philistines. And he smote 2
Moab, and measured them with a line, casting them down
to the ground; even *with* two lines measured he to put to
death, and *with* one full line to keep alive. And *so* the
Moabites became David's servants, and brought gifts.

David smote also Hadadezer, the son of Rehob, king of Zobah, 3
as he went to recover his border at the river Euphrates. And 4

It seems best to consider the words "and after this it came to pass" as a general formula of transition and connexion, not necessarily indicating a strict chronological sequence. It may possibly be derived from the annals which were the original source of the history. Comp. vii. 1, note, ch. x. 1, xiii. 1. **1, 2.** Conquest of the Philistines and Moabites. **1.** *took Metheg-ammah*] Or, as R.V., **took the bridle of the mother city** &c.; wrested from the Philistines the control of their metropolis. This is equivalent to the statement in 1 Chr. xviii. 1 that "David took Gath and her towns out of the hand of the Philistines;" and it may be noticed that the metaphor of the 'mother-city' is employed there, for the word translated "towns" literally means *daughters*. Gath was allowed to retain its king as a tributary (1 Kings ii. 39). **2.** R.V. **and measured them with the line, making them to lie down on the ground; and he measured two lines to put to death, and one full line to keep alive.** The Moabite prisoners, doubtless only the fighting men, were ordered to lie down upon the ground in rows, which were measured with a measuring line. Two-thirds of them were executed, and only the remaining third spared. Why David inflicted such terrible vengeance on a nation which had once received him and given his parents an asylum (1 Sam. xxii. 3, 4) can only be conjectured. A Jewish tradition relates that the king of Moab betrayed his trust and murdered David's parents. Possibly the Moabites may have been guilty of some special act of treachery in one of David's wars with their neighbours the Ammonites or Edomites. *gifts*] R.V. **presents;** i.e. tribute. (Cp. *v.* 6; 1 Kings iv. 21; 2 Kings iii. 4 ff.)

3—8. Conquest of Zobah and Damascus. **3.** *Hadadezer*] Written *Hadarezer* in ch. x. 16—19, and in Chronicles, the letters *d* and *r* being easily confused in Hebrew. *Hadad* was the name of the Syrian sun-god, and *Hadadezer* appears to be the true form, meaning "whose help is Hadad." *Zobah*] This kingdom seems to have been north-east of Damascus and south of Hamath, between the Orontes and Euphrates. Saul waged wars with its "kings," who were probably independent chieftains (1 Sam. xiv. 47), but now it was consolidated under one ruler, and was a country of considerable wealth and power. *his border*] R.V. **his dominion.** The occasion referred to is probably that which is described more fully in ch. x. 15—19. *at the river Euphrates*] R.V. **at the River;** with marg. note, 'Another reading is, *the river Euphrates*.' But the addition is unnecessary. "The River" by

David took from him a thousand *chariots*, and seven hundred horsemen, and twenty thousand footmen: and David houghed all the chariot *horses*, but reserved of them *for* an hundred
5 chariots. And when the Syrians of Damascus came to succour Hadadezer king of Zobah, David slew of the Syrians two and
6 twenty thousand men. Then David put garrisons in Syria of Damascus: and the Syrians became servants to David, and brought gifts. And the LORD preserved David whithersо-
7 ever he went. And David took the shields of gold that were on the servants of Hadadezer, and brought them *to* Jerusalem.
8 And from Betah, and from Berothai, cities of Hadadezer, king David took exceeding much brass.
9 When Toi king of Hamath heard that David had smitten all
10 the host of Hadadezer, then Toi sent Joram his son unto king

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itself was understood to mean the Euphrates. Cp. ch. x. 16; Ps. lxxii. 8. **4.** *a thousand* chariots &c.] The Heb. means **a thousand and seven hundred horsemen** (R.V.): but perhaps we should follow the Sept. and 1 Chr. xviii. 4 in reading *a thousand chariots and seven thousand horsemen.* *houghed*] i.e. **hamstrung;** disabled by cutting the back sinews of their hind legs. Cp. Josh. xi. 6, 9. *reserved*] To grace his triumph. **5.** The kingdom of which Damascus was the capital was the most powerful branch of the Aramaeans or Syrians, and played an important part in the history of Israel. See 1 Kings xi. 23—25, xv. 18, xx. 1, 34, xxii; 2 Kings vi. 24—vii, viii. 28, 29, x. 32, 33, xii. 17, 18, xiii. 3—7, 25, xiv. 28, xvi. 5; Is. vii. 1—9. Damascus was destroyed by Tiglath-pileser in the reign of Ahaz (2 Kings xvi. 7—9); and then disappears from the O.T. history; but by the fourth century B.C. it had been rebuilt, and has maintained its prosperity down to the present day. **6.** *garrisons*] Military posts to secure the country. Comp. 1 Sam. x. 5. *gifts*] R.V. **presents.** Comp. *v.* 2. *preserved*] R.V. **gave victory to D.;** or, marg., *saved;* and so in *v.* 14. Cp. iii. 18, xxii. 3, 4. **7.** Probably it was his bodyguard which was distinguished by these golden shields. Similarly a corps of the Macedonian army under Alexander the Great was known as "the silver-shields." **8.** *Betah*] Unknown, called *Tibhath* in 1 Chr. xviii. 8. *Berothai*] Probably the same as *Berothah*, mentioned by Ezekiel (xlvii. 16) in connexion with Hamath and Damascus. The name *Chun*, given in Chr., may be a later name for the place, or a corruption of the text. *brass*] Probably **copper,** or **bronze.**

9—12. Congratulatory embassy from Toi king of Hamath.

9. *Toi*] In the Sept. and Chron. *Toü.* *Hamath*] A kingdom north of Zobah, with a capital of the same name situated on the Orontes. See 1 Kings iv. 24; 2 Chr. viii. 4; 2 Kings xiv. 28, xix. 13; Amos vi. 2. A considerable town, retaining the name of *Hamah*, still occupies the site. **10.** *Joram*] *Hadoram*, the name given in Chr., is probably the true reading, for which the Hebrew name *Joram* has been substituted by a scribe's error. *to bless him*]

David, to salute him, and to bless him, because he had fought against Hadadezer, and smitten him: for Hadadezer had wars with Toi. And *Joram* brought with him vessels of silver, and vessels of gold, and vessels of brass: which also king David did 11
dedicate unto the LORD, with the silver and gold that he had dedicated of all nations which he subdued; of Syria, and of 12
Moab, and of the children of Ammon, and of the Philistines, and of Amalek, and of the spoil of Hadadezer, son of Rehob, king of Zobah.

And David gat *him* a name when he returned from smiting 13
of the Syrians in the valley of salt, *being* eighteen thousand *men*. And he put garrisons in Edom; throughout all Edom put 14
he garrisons, and all they of Edom became David's servants. And the LORD preserved David whithersoever he went.

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i.e. to congratulate him. Joram brought a valuable present, intended to secure the goodwill of his powerful neighbour. Comp. 1 Kings xv. 18. **12.** *Syria*] The Sept. and Chron. read *Edom* instead of *Aram* (Syria). The two names are very similar in Hebrew, and easily confused (cp. note on *v.* 3). It is not easy to decide which is right. The order, and the connexion with Moab and Ammon, are in favour of *Edom:* on the other hand Edom has not yet been mentioned, and Syria of Damascus was distinct from Zobah, and might very well be specified in addition to it (*v.* 5).

Amalek] The only allusion to an Amalekite war, unless the spoil taken in the victory of 1 Sam. xxx. 16 ff. is meant.

13, 14. Conquest of Edom. **13.** There is some error in the text here. We must either read **Edom** for *Aram* (the Syrians), with the Sept. and 1 Chr. xviii. 12; or insert after *Syrians* the words, *and he smote Edom*. The Valley of Salt was nowhere in the neighbourhood of Syria, but on the ancient border between Judah and Edom, to the S. of the Dead Sea. Comp. 2 Kings xiv. 7. Psalm lx. is referred to this occasion by its title; "Michtam of David. When he strove with Aram-Naharaim and with Aram-Zobah, and Joab returned, and smote of Edom in the Valley of Salt twelve thousand." We may conjecture that while David was occupied with his campaign against the Ammonites and Syrians, Edom seized the opportunity for invading the south of Judah, and succeeded in inflicting serious damage, until David sent back part of his forces under Joab or Abishai, and repulsed their attack, following up his victory by the complete subjugation of Edom (1 Kings xi. 15, 16). That the successful campaign is here attributed to David, in Chr. to Abishai, in the Psalm and in 1 Kings to Joab, need cause no difficulty. David was concerned in it as king, Joab as general of the army, Abishai probably as commander of the division sent forward in advance. The variations as to the number of slain, here put at 18,000, in the Psalm at 12,000, may be due either to a textual error, or to some difference in the mode of reckoning. **14.** Stress is laid by the words *throughout all Edom* on the completeness with which David subjugated the

15 And David reigned over all Israel; and David executed
16 judgment and justice unto all his people. And Joab the son of Zeruiah *was* over the host; and Jehoshaphat the son of
17 Ahilud *was* recorder; and Zadok the son of Ahitub, and Ahimelech the son of Abiathar, *were* the priests; and Seraiah *was*
18 the scribe; and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada *was over* both the Cherethites and the Pelethites; and David's sons were chief rulers.

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country. Thus was fulfilled the first part of Isaac's prophecy (Gen. xxvii. 37—40), and Balaam's prophecy (Num. xxiv. 17, 18).

15—18. David's administration and officers. Another list of these officers is given in ch. xx. 23—26: on the differences see notes there. Comp. the list of Solomon's officers in 1 Kings iv. 1—6.

15. *executed judgment and justice*] Proving himself the true representative of Jehovah, whose attributes these are (Ps. xxxiii. 5, lxxxix. 14); and a true type of the perfect Messianic King (Is. ix. 7, xxxii. 1; Jer. xxiii. 5, 6). **16.** *recorder*] Or, *chronicler* (R.V. marg.): a state officer of high rank, who seems not only to have kept a record of events, but to have acted as the king's adviser. Cp. 2 Kings xviii. 18, 37; 2 Chr. xxxiv. 8. **17.** *Zadok*] Zadok was of the house of Eleazar (1 Chr. vi. 4—8). He joined David at Hebron after Saul's death (1 Chr. xii. 28), and remained faithful to him throughout his reign (2 Sam. xv. 24—29, xvii. 15, xix. 11). When Abiathar joined the rebellion of Adonijah, Zadok was made sole high-priest (1 Kings i. 8, 44, ii. 35), which office he held during some part of Solomon's reign (1 Kings iv. 4). *Ahimelech the son of Abiathar*] Since Zadok and Abiathar are elsewhere constantly mentioned together as the high-priests in David's reign, and it is clear from 1 Sam. xxii. 20—23 that Abiathar was the son of Ahimelech, and from 1 Kings i, ii. 26 that he held office throughout David's reign, it seems necessary to emend the text and read **Abiathar the son of Ahimelech.** *priests*] Zadok officiated in the Tabernacle at Gibeon (1 Chr. xvi. 39), Abiathar probably before the Ark in Jerusalem. *Seraiah*] Called in 1 Chr. xviii. 16 *Shavsha*, and probably the same as *Sheva* or *Sheya* (2 Sam. xx. 25) and *Shisha* (1 Kings iv. 3). *scribe*] Secretary of state: an official mentioned several times in the course of the history: e.g. 2 Kings xii. 10, xviii. 18, 37, xxii. 3, &c. **18.** *Benaiah*] See on xxiii. 20. was over] So ch. xx. 23, and 1 Chr. xviii. 17. The Heb. text here has, *and the Cherethites* &c. The Sept. reads, *Benaiah the son of Jehoiada was counsellor. the Cherethites and the Pelethites*] Troops which seem to have formed the king's body-guard. See ch. xv. 18, xx. 7, 23; 1 Kings i. 38, 44; 1 Chr. xviii. 17. The names have been explained to mean *executioners* and *runners*, it being the duty of the royal guards to execute sentence (see Gen. xxxvii. 36 *marg.*; 1 Kings ii. 25), and to convey the king's orders from place to place (see 2 Chr. xxx. 6): or as the names of two Philistine tribes, the body-guard being composed of foreign mercenaries, like the Pope's Swiss guard. The latter explanation is probably right. *chief rulers*] R.V. **priests;**

And David said, Is there yet *any* that is left of the house of 9
Saul, that I may shew him kindness for Jonathan's sake?
And *there was* of the house of Saul a servant whose name 2
was Ziba. And when they had called him unto David, the
king said unto him, *Art* thou Ziba? And he said, Thy servant
is he. And the king said, *Is there* not yet any of the house of 3
Saul, that I may shew the kindness of God unto him? And
Ziba said unto the king, Jonathan hath yet a son, *which is*
lame on *his* feet. And the king said unto him, Where *is* he? 4
And Ziba said unto the king, Behold, he *is in* the house of
Machir, the son of Ammiel, in Lo-debar. Then king David 5
sent, and fet him out of the house of Machir, the son of
Ammiel, from Lo-debar. Now when Mephibosheth, the son of 6
Jonathan, the son of Saul, was come unto David, he fell on his
face, and did reverence. And David said, Mephibosheth. And
he answered, Behold thy servant. And David said unto him, 7
Fear not: for I will surely shew thee kindness for Jonathan
thy father's sake, and will restore thee all the land of Saul thy
father; and thou shalt eat bread at my table continually.
And he bowed himself, and said, What *is* thy servant, that 8
thou shouldest look upon such a dead dog as I *am*? Then 9

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marg. *chief ministers*. The word is that usually translated *priest*, but in a few instances seems to denote a civil not an ecclesiastical minister, the king's confidential adviser. Cp. the paraphrase in 1 Chr. xviii. 17 "chief about the king;" and 1 Kings iv. 5, where the A.V. renders "principal officer."

IX. **1—13.** David's kindness to Mephibosheth. **1.** *for Jonathan's sake*] In fulfilment of his oath (1 Sam. xx. 14—17, 42). **3.** *the kindness of God*] Kindness or mercy such as God shews to men. A reference to Jonathan's words in 1 Sam. xx. 14. Cp. Luke vi. 36. *lame on* his *feet*] See ch. iv. 4. *Machir*] A man of wealth and position, to judge from the welcome which he gave David in his flight from Absalom (ch. xvii. 27—29). *Lo-debar*] A town on the E. of the Jordan in the neighbourhood of Mahanaim, possibly the *Debir* of Josh. xiii. 26. **5.** *fet*] R.V. **fetched**. The archaic form *fet* appears in several passages in the original edition of the A.V. (1611), and is found in Shakespeare. **6.** R.V. **And M....came...and fell on his face, and did obeisance.** *Mephibosheth*] See note on ch. iv. 4. **7.** *Fear not*] Mephibosheth might be afraid that David had only hunted him out to treat him after the common fashion of Oriental usurpers, who often put all their predecessor's kindred to death. He seems to have lived in concealment at Lo-debar. *the land* &c.] Saul's private estate at Gibeah, which passed into David's possession when he came to the throne (ch. xii. 8). Father = grandfather, as frequently; so in *v.* 9, son = grandson. *thou shalt eat bread at my table*] A common mark of honour in Oriental countries. See 1 Kings ii. 7; 2 Kings xxv. 29. **8.** *bowed himself*] R.V. **did obeisance**, as in *v.* 6. *a dead dog*]

the king called to Ziba, Saul's servant, and said unto him, I have given unto thy master's son all that pertained to Saul
10 and to all his house. Thou therefore, and thy sons, and thy servants, shall till the land for him, and thou shalt bring in *the fruits*, that thy master's son may have food to eat: but Mephibosheth thy master's son shall eat bread alway at my
11 table. Now Ziba had fifteen sons and twenty servants. Then said Ziba unto the king, According to all that my lord the king hath commanded his servant, so shall thy servant do. As for Mephibosheth, *said the king*, he shall eat at my table,
12 as one of the king's sons. And Mephibosheth had a young son, whose name *was* Micha. And all that dwelt in the house
13 of Ziba *were* servants unto Mephibosheth. So Mephibosheth dwelt in Jerusalem: for he did eat continually at the king's table; and *was* lame on both his feet.

10 And it came to pass after this, that the king of the children

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The vilest and most contemptible object possible. See note on ch. iii. 8; and cp. ch. xvi. 9; 1 Sam. xxiv. 14. **10.** R.V. **And thou shalt till the land for him, thou, and thy sons, and thy servants.** *that thy master's son* &c.] Though Mephibosheth himself was to be a guest at the royal table, he would require the revenues of this estate for the support of his family and household. **11.** *As for Mephibosheth*, said the king] There is nothing to warrant the insertion of the words "said the king;" nor can the words be Ziba's assertion that he would himself have entertained Mephibosheth royally, as R.V. marg., *But Mephibosheth eateth* &c. It is best to follow the Sept. and to take the clause along with the next two verses as the narrator's conclusion of the story, thus: "**So Mephibosheth did eat at David's table, as one of the king's sons.**" **12. Mica** (R.V.) had a numerous posterity. See 1 Chr. viii. 34 ff.

X. [=1 Chron. xix]. War with the Ammonites and their allies the Syrians. David had reached the summit of his prosperity and power. The historian has now to record how he fell from that height into a sin which brought shame and suffering upon himself and disaster upon his kingdom. This war with the Ammonites is described in detail, because of its close connexion with that act, which marked the fatal turning-point in David's reign. The war with the Ammonites is incidentally alluded to in ch. viii. 12 among David's other wars; and the war with the Syrians to which it led is probably the same as that recorded in ch. viii. 3—6. There the account forms part of the collected summary of David's wars: here it appears in connexion with the history of the Ammonite war, which is being related in full in order to lead up to and explain the circumstances of David's fall.

1—5. David's ambassadors insulted by the Ammonites.

1. *And it came to pass after this*] See note on ch. viii. 1. *the king* &c.] Forty years at least had passed since the events

of Ammon died, and Hanun his son reigned in his stead.
Then said David, I will shew kindness unto Hanun the son of 2
Nahash, as his father shewed kindness unto me. And David
sent to comfort him by the hand of his servants for his father.
And David's servants came *into* the land of the children of
Ammon. And the princes of the children of Ammon said unto 3
Hanun their lord, Thinkest thou that David doth honour thy
father, that he hath sent comforters unto thee? hath not
David *rather* sent his servants unto thee, to search the city,
and to spy it out, and to overthrow it? Wherefore Hanun 4
took David's servants, and shaved off the *one* half of their
beards, and cut off their garments in the middle, *even* to their
buttocks, and sent them away. When they told *it* unto 5
David, he sent to meet them, because the men were greatly
ashamed: and the king said, Tarry at Jericho until your
beards be grown, and *then* return.

And when the children of Ammon saw that they stank before 6
David, the children of Ammon sent and hired the Syrians of
Beth-rehob, and the Syrians of Zoba, twenty thousand foot-

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of 1 Sam. xi, so that this Nahash was probably the son or grandson of the king defeated by Saul at Jabesh. On the Ammonites see note on 1 Sam. xi. 1. *Hanun*] This name is identical with the Phoenician *Hanno*, which appears so frequently in Carthaginian history. **2.** *And David* &c.] R.V. **So David sent by the hand of his servants to comfort him concerning his father.** **3.** The new king's counsellors were as foolish as Rehoboam's advisers (1 Kings xii. 10, 11). Their suspicions of David's motives may have been excited by his recent conquest of Moab. *the city*] Rabbah, which was strongly fortified. See ch. xi. 1. **4.** No grosser insult could have been devised. The beard was and still is to an Oriental the badge of the dignity of manhood. It was only shaved as a sign of the deepest mourning. See Is. xv. 2; Jer. xli. 5. *cut off their garments*] The ambassadors, who wore long dignified garments, were sent away in the shameful plight of captives. See Is. xx. 4.

6—14. Defeat of the Ammonites and their Syrian allies.

6. *that they stank*] R.V. **that they were become odious to David.** Ancient history records many wars undertaken to avenge insults offered to ambassadors, whose persons have always been considered sacred by the law of nations. *hired*] For other instances of the employment of mercenary troops see 2 Kings vii. 6; 2 Chron. xxv. 6. *Beth-rehob*] Beth-rehob (=*house of Rehob*) or Rehob (*v.* 8), the capital of this Syrian kingdom, can hardly be the Beth-rehob near Dan mentioned in Jud. xviii. 28, which was in Israelite territory. It is better to place it at *Ruhaïbeh*, 25 miles N.E. of Damascus, or to identify it with *Rehoboth by the river* (Gen. xxxvi. 37), the site of which is fixed a few miles below the junction of the Chaboras with the Euphrates. In this case the Mesopotamians mentioned in the parallel passage in

men, and of king Maacah a thousand men, and of Ish-tob
7 twelve thousand men. And when David heard *of it*, he sent
8 Joab, and all the host *of* the mighty *men*. And the children of Ammon came out, and put the battle in array *at* the entering in of the gate: and the Syrians of Zoba, and of Rehob, and
9 Ish-tob, and Maacah, *were* by themselves in the field. When Joab saw that the front of the battle was against him before and behind, he chose of all the choice *men* of Israel, and put
10 *them* in array against the Syrians: and the rest of the people he delivered into the hand of Abishai his brother, that he
11 might put *them* in array against the children of Ammon. And he said, If the Syrians be too strong for me, then thou shalt help me: but if the children of Ammon be too strong for thee,
12 then I will come and help thee. Be of good courage, and let us play the men for our people, and for the cities of our God: and
13 the LORD do that which seemeth him good. And Joab drew nigh, and the people that *were* with him, unto the battle against
14 the Syrians: and they fled before him. And when the children of Ammon saw that the Syrians were fled, *then* fled they *also*

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1 Chron. may be the same as the Syrians of Beth-rehob. *the Syrians of Zoba*] See note on ch. viii. 3. *and of king Maacah* &c.] R.V. **and the king of Maacah with a thousand men.** This small Syrian kingdom was in the neighbourhood of Geshur, adjoining the province of Argob in the north-east of Bashan (Deut. iii. 14), somewhere to the east of the wild and rocky region now called *El-Lejah*. *and of Ish-tob*] R.V. **and the men of Tob,** the district in which Jephthah took refuge (Jud. xi. 3), somewhere N. or E. of Gilead, between Syria and the country of the Ammonites. **8.** at *the entering in of the gate*] Apparently not the gate of the Ammonite capital Rabbah, but, according to 1 Chr. xix. 7, of Medeba, which was nearly 20 miles S.W. of Rabbah. *and Ish-Tob, and Maacah*] R.V. **and the men of Tob and Maacah.** *in the field*] "The plain of Medeba" (Josh. xiii. 9, 16) would be an advantageous place for the manœuvres of a large army, especially with chariots and cavalry.

9. that the battle was set against him before and behind (R.V.). The Ammonites were posted in front of the city, the Syrians on the plain opposite to them: if he attacked either force separately, his rear would be exposed to the other.

10. *that he might* &c.] R.V. **and he put them in array.**

12. *for the cities of our God*] As the people of Israel were the people of the LORD, so the land which He had given them was His, and its cities were His. They were fighting "the LORD'S battles," that these cities might not fall into heathen hands and be given over to the worship of heathen gods. Cp. 1 Sam. xvii. 36, 47, xviii. 17. *the LORD do* &c.] An expression of trust combined with resignation. Cp. 1 Sam. iii. 18. **14.** The rout of the Syrians left Joab free to help Abishai, and the Ammonites retired at once

before Abishai, and entered *into* the city. So Joab returned from the children of Ammon, and came *to* Jerusalem.

15 And when the Syrians saw that they were smitten before Israel, they gathered themselves together. 16 And Hadarezer sent, and brought out the Syrians that *were* beyond the river: and they came *to* Helam; and Shobach the captain of the host of Hadarezer *went* before them. 17 And when it was told David, he gathered all Israel together, and passed over Jordan, and came to Helam. And the Syrians set *themselves* in array against David, and fought with him. 18 And the Syrians fled before Israel; and David slew *the men of* seven hundred chariots of the Syrians, and forty thousand horsemen, and smote Shobach the captain of their host, who died there. 19 And when all the kings *that were* servants to Hadarezer saw that they were smitten before Israel, they made peace with Israel, and served them. So the Syrians feared to help the children of Ammon any more.

11 And it came to pass, after the year was expired, at the time when kings go forth *to battle*, that David sent Joab, and his servants with him, and all Israel; and they destroyed the

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within the walls of the city. *Joab returned*] Most likely the season was too far advanced to attempt a siege. Cp. ch. xi. 1.

15—19. Renewed attack of the Syrians. Their total defeat.

16. *Hadarezer*] The correct form of his name is probably *Hadadezer*. See note on ch. viii. 3. He now mustered his vassals and tributaries (*v.* 19) from beyond "the River," i.e. the Euphrates. *brought out* = caused to take the field. *Helam*] Perhaps *Alamata*, a town west of the Euphrates. **16.** *and Shobach* &c.] R.V. **with S. the captain of the host of H. at their head.**

18. The present text of Chronicles has *seven thousand chariots... forty thousand footmen*. It seems best to retain the reading *seven hundred chariots*, and follow Chronicles in reading *footmen*. But the omission of *horsemen* in the one and *footmen* in the other makes it likely that there is some further corruption. **19.** Hadarezer's vassals and tributaries transferred their allegiance to David. According to ch. viii. 6 (assuming it to refer to the same war), the kingdom of Damascus was completely subjugated and secured by military stations. Both there and here it is implied that Hadarezer himself still maintained his independence in Zobah. *smitten*] R.V. **put to the worse.**

XI. **1** [= 1 Chr. xx. 1]. The siege of Rabbah. **1.** *after the year was expired*] R.V., **at the return of the year**, that is, when spring set in with the commencement of the year in the month Abib or Nisan. Cp. 1 Kings xx. 22, 26; 2 Chr. xxxvi. 10. *at the time* &c.] At the time of year when they are accustomed to reopen the campaign after the winter cessation of hostilities. *destroyed* &c.] i.e. as in 1 Chr. xx. 1, "wasted the country of the children of Ammon." While Rabbah was besieged,

children of Ammon, and besieged Rabbah. But David tarried *still* at Jerusalem.

2 And it came to pass in an eveningtide, that David arose from off his bed, and walked upon the roof of the king's house: and from the roof he saw a woman washing *herself;* and the woman
3 *was* very beautiful to look upon. And David sent and inquired after the woman. And *one* said, *Is* not this Bath-sheba, the
4 daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite? And David sent messengers, and took her; and she came in unto him, and

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the country was ravaged. *Rabbah* (= the great city), or more fully *Rabbah of the children of Ammon* (xii. 26), the capital of the Ammonites, was situated in a strong position about 22 miles east of the Jordan, on a branch of the valley of the Jabbok. It consisted of the lower town, called "the city of waters" (xii. 27), from the perennial stream which has its source in it; and the citadel, a place of great strength, built on a hill rising abruptly on the north side of the lower town (xii. 28, 29). *David tarried* &c.] Exposing himself to the temptations of idleness.

2—5. David's adultery with Bath-sheba. Holy Scripture paints sin in its true colours. No friendly flattery, no false modesty, draws a veil over this dark scene in David's life. It is recorded as a warning (1 Cor. x. 11, 12), that even holy men may fall into gross sin; that one sin leads to others; that sin, even when repented of, brings punishment in its train. The king who but a few years before had sung of "clean hands and a pure heart" (Ps. xxiv. 4), and vowed to exclude from his palace all workers of deceit (Ps. ci. 7), is dragged by his passion into meanness, ingratitude, dissimulation, treachery, murder. But if the history is a stern record of the enthralling power and the inevitable consequences of sin, it is no less a testimony to the liberating power of repentance. In the words of Bishop Hall: "How can we presume of not sinning, or despair for sinning, when we find so great a saint thus fallen, thus risen." It is the key to the history of the rest of David's reign. It explains the sudden overclouding of his life; the change from triumph and prosperity to sorrow and failure. See further in the Introduction, p. 12 f. **2.** *in an eveningtide*] R.V. **at eventide**, in the cool of the afternoon, after his midday siesta. Cp. ch. iv. 5. *the roof*] The flat roofs of Oriental houses "afford a most delightful promenade...During a large part of the year the roof is the most agreeable place about the establishment, especially in the morning and the evening." **3.** *Bath-sheba, the daughter of Eliam*] In 1 Chr. iii. 5 she is called *Bath-shua, the daughter of Ammiel. Eliam* (= God of the people) and *Ammiel* (= people of God) are compounded of the same words placed in different order. If this Eliam was the same as Uriah's brother-officer, mentioned in ch. xxiii. 34, Bath-sheba was the grand-daughter of David's counsellor Ahithophel. But the identification is very doubtful. *Uriah the Hittite*] One of David's "mighty men" (ch. xxiii. 39). His name (= light of Jah) indicates that although he was a Canaanite by race, he had adopted the

he lay with her; for she was purified from her uncleanness: and she returned unto her house. And the woman conceived, 5
and sent and told David, and said, I *am* with child.

And David sent to Joab, *saying*, Send me Uriah the Hittite. 6
And Joab sent Uriah to David. And when Uriah was come 7
unto him, David demanded *of him* how Joab did, and how the people did, and how the war prospered. And David said to 8
Uriah, Go down to thy house, and wash thy feet. And Uriah departed out of the king's house, and there followed him a mess *of meat* from the king. But Uriah slept *at* the door of 9
the king's house with all the servants of his lord, and went not down to his house. And when they had told David, saying, 10
Uriah went not down unto his house, David said unto Uriah, Camest thou not from *thy* journey? why *then* didst thou not go down unto thine house? And Uriah said unto David, The 11
ark, and Israel, and Judah, abide in tents; and my lord Joab, and the servants of my lord, are encamped in the open fields; shall I then go into mine house, to eat and to drink, and to lie with my wife? *as* thou livest, and *as* thy soul liveth, I will not do this thing. And David said to Uriah, Tarry here to day also, 12
and to morrow I will let thee depart. So Uriah abode in Jerusalem that day, and the morrow. And when David had called 13
him, he did eat and drink before him; and he made him drunk: and at even he went out to lie on his bed with the servants of his lord, but went not down to his house.

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religion of Israel. Another Hittite in David's service was Ahimelech (1 Sam. xxvi. 6).

6—13. Uriah summoned to Jerusalem. **7.** David sent for Uriah ostensibly to bring him word about the progress of the war. Uriah, as one of the "mighty men," no doubt held some command in the army. *demanded*] R.V. **asked.** The use of *demand*, like Fr. *demander*, meaning simply 'to ask,' is an archaism.

8. *wash thy feet*] An indispensable refreshment after a journey in the East, where sandals only were worn. Cp. Gen. xviii. 4, xliii. 24; Luke vii. 44. *a mess* of meat] A portion from the king's table as a mark of honour for his faithful servant. Cp. Gen. xliii. 34. Or, as R.V. marg., *a present from the king.* **9.** at *the door* &c.] Probably in the guard-chamber in the outer court. Cp. 1 Kings xiv. 27, 28. **10.** *Camest thou not* &c.] R.V. **Art thou not come from a journey?** David expresses surprise that Uriah had not gone home, as men usually do on their return from a journey. **11.** *The ark*] These wars were "the wars of Jehovah" (see note on ch. x. 12), and the Ark had been taken along with the army as the symbol of His presence and favour. Comp. Josh. vi. 6; 1 Sam. iv. 3; 2 Sam. xv. 24. *tents*] R.V. **booths,** rough huts extemporised out of the boughs of trees.

12. *that day* &c.] Probably the punctuation should be altered as in R.V. marg., *So U. abode in Jerusalem that day. And on the morrow David called him, and he* &c.

14 And it came to pass in the morning, that David wrote a
15 letter to Joab, and sent *it* by the hand of Uriah. And he wrote
in the letter, saying, Set ye Uriah in the forefront of the hottest
battle, and retire ye from him, that he may be smitten, and
16 die. And it came to pass, when Joab observed the city, that he
assigned Uriah unto a place where he knew that valiant men
17 *were*. And the men of the city went out, and fought with
Joab: and there fell *some* of the people of the servants of
David; and Uriah the Hittite died also.
18 Then Joab sent and told David all the things concerning the
19 war; and charged the messenger, saying, When thou hast
made an end of telling the matters of the war unto the king,
20 and if so be that the king's wrath arise, and he say unto thee,
Wherefore approached ye *so* nigh unto the city when *ye* did
21 fight? knew ye not that they would shoot from the wall? Who
smote Abimelech the son of Jerubbesheth? did not a woman
cast a piece of a millstone upon him from the wall, that he
died in Thebez? why went ye nigh the wall? then say thou,
22 Thy servant Uriah the Hittite is dead also. So the messenger
went, and came and shewed David all that Joab had sent him
23 for. And the messenger said unto David, Surely the men pre-
vailed against us, and came out unto us *into* the field, and we
24 were upon them *even* unto the entering of the gate. And the

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14—17. David's letter to Joab. Uriah's death. **15.** So blinded was David by his passion, that he did not shrink from plotting the murder of one of his bravest soldiers. The king's command was sufficient warrant to Joab, without inquiry into the reason for it. **16.** *observed the city*] R.V. **kept watch upon the city,** i.e. besieged it. *a place* &c.] Uriah was posted opposite the most strongly guarded part of the city, where the fighting was likely to be fiercest in case of a sally. **17.** *went out*] Made a sally, in which, as the messenger describes (*vv.* 23, 24), the men of Israel imprudently pursued the enemy till they were within shot of the archers on the wall, and suffered considerable loss. *there fell* &c.] R.V., **there fell some of the people, even of the servants of David.**

18—25. News of Uriah's death carried to David. **19.** *the matters of the war*] R.V. **all the things concerning the war,** as in *v.* 18. **20.** Joab assumes that David would find fault with him until he knew that his commission was executed.

21. See Jud. ix. 50—54. *Jerubbesheth*] Jerubbaal or Gideon (Jud. vi. 32). The form *Jerubbesheth* occurs here only. The Sept. reads *Jerubbaal*, and this was perhaps the original reading, altered for the reasons stated in the note to ch. ii. 8. *a piece of a millstone*] R.V. **an upper millstone.** *Thebez*] The site and name are both preserved by the village of *Tubâs*, about ten miles N.E. of Shechem. **23.** *we were upon them*] We repulsed the sally, and pursued them to the gate of the city.

shooters shot from off the wall upon thy servants; and *some* of the king's servants be dead, and thy servant Uriah the Hittite is dead also. Then David said unto the messenger, Thus shalt 25
thou say unto Joab, Let not this thing displease thee, for the sword devoureth one as well as another: make thy battle *more* strong against the city, and overthrow it: and encourage thou him.

And when the wife of Uriah heard that Uriah her husband 26
was dead, she mourned for her husband. And when the mourn- 27
ing was past, David sent and fet her to his house, and she became his wife, and bare him a son. But the thing that David had done displeased the LORD.

And the LORD sent Nathan unto David. And he came unto 12
him, and said unto him, There were two men in one city; the one rich, and the other poor. The rich *man* had exceeding 2
many flocks and herds: but the poor *man* had nothing, save 3
one little ewe lamb, which he had bought and nourished up: and it grew up together with him, and with his children; it did eat of his own meat, and drank of his own cup, and lay in his bosom, and was unto him as a daughter. And there came 4
a traveller unto the rich man, and he spared to take of his own flock and of his own herd, to dress for the wayfaring man that was come unto him; but took the poor man's lamb, and dressed it for the man that was come to him. And David's 5

26, 27. Bath-sheba becomes David's wife. **26.** *mourned*] R.V. **made lamentation.** Seven days was the usual period of mourning. See Gen. l. 10; 1 Sam. xxxi. 13; Judith xvi. 24; Ecclus. xxii. 12. In exceptional cases thirty days were observed. See Num. xx. 29; Deut. xxxiv. 8. No special time seems to have been prescribed for widows. **27.** *fet her*] See on ch. ix. 5. R.V. **took her home.** *But the thing* &c.] The Divine sentence on David's conduct prepares the way for the mission of Nathan in the next chapter.

XII. **1—6.** Nathan's Parable. **1.** A year had passed, and Bath-sheba's child had been born, before Nathan was sent to rouse the king's slumbering conscience. To this crisis belong Psalms li. and xxxii. *and said unto him*] The prophet asks for the king's decision, as though he were consulting him about an actual case. Comp. xiv. 4—7; 1 Kings xx. 35—41. Other parables are found in the O.T. in Jud. ix. 7—15; 2 Kings xiv. 9; Is. v. 1, 2.

2. The details of the parable are all arranged so as to bring the heartless selfishness of the rich man into the strongest relief.

3. *of his own meat*] R.V. **of his own morsel.** The A.V. misses something of the graphic tenderness of the original, describing how the lamb actually shared the poor man's meal.

4. "The apologue of the rich man and the ewe lamb...ventures to disregard all particulars, and is content to aim at awakening the general sense of outraged justice. It fastens on the essential guilt of David's sin; not its sensuality or its impurity, so much as its

anger was greatly kindled against the man; and he said to Nathan, *As* the LORD liveth, the man that hath done this
6 *thing* shall surely die: and he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity.
7 And Nathan said to David, Thou *art* the man. Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, I anointed thee king over Israel, and I de-
8 livered thee out of the hand of Saul; and I gave thee thy master's house, and thy master's wives into thy bosom, and gave thee the house of Israel and of Judah; and if *that had been too* little, I would moreover have given unto thee such and such things.
9 Wherefore hast thou despised the commandment of the LORD, to do evil in his sight? thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and hast taken his wife to be thy wife, and hast
10 slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon. Now therefore the sword shall never depart from thine house, because thou hast despised me, and hast taken the wife of Uriah
11 the Hittite to be thy wife. Thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house, and I will take thy wives before thine eyes, and give *them* unto thy neighbour, and he shall lie with thy wives in the sight of this
12 sun. For thou didst *it* secretly: but I will do this thing
13 before all Israel, and before the sun. And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the LORD. And Nathan said

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meanness and selfishness." *Stanley.* **5.** *shall surely die*] R.V. **is worthy to die,** lit. *is a son of death.* Cp. 1 Sam. xx. 31, xxvi. 16. **6. fourfold**] The legal compensation. See Ex. xxii. 1; Luke xix. 8.

7—14. The prophet's sentence. David's confession. **7.** The consciousness that they were God's messengers inspired the prophets with fearless courage. *I anointed thee* &c.] God's successive favours to David are enumerated, to bring out the baseness of his ingratitude and the folly of his sin. **8.** *thy master's house*] His household and property. Cp. ch. ix. 7. *thy master's wives*] It was lawful for the king, and for him only, to marry his predecessor's wives. **9.** Comp. Num. xv. 31; 1 Sam. xv. 23, 26. Great as was David's sin against Uriah and Bath-sheba, his sin against God was greater in thus breaking two express commandments of the Decalogue. Cp. Ps. li. 4.

and hast slain him &c.] This is not a mere repetition of the clause **thou hast smitten Uriah the Hittite with the sword** (R.V.). The verb is stronger, "thou hast murdered;" and the offence is shewn to have been aggravated by the employment of the Ammonites, the enemies of God's people, as the instruments for its commission. **10.** *shall never depart*] The Heb. word for *never* is a relative term, to be explained by the context. Here it is equivalent to "all the days of thy life." Cp. 1 Sam. i. 22, xxvii. 12. The prophecy was fulfilled by Amnon's murder (ch. xiii. 28); Absalom's death as a rebel (ch. xviii. 14); and Adonijah's execution as a traitor (1 Kings ii. 25). **13.** *I have sinned against the*

unto David, The LORD also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die. Howbeit, because by this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme, the child also that is born unto thee shall surely die. 14

And Nathan departed unto his house. And the LORD strake the child that Uriah's wife bare unto David, and it was very sick. David therefore besought God for the child; and David fasted, and went in, and lay all night upon the earth. And the elders of his house arose, *and went* to him, to raise him up from the earth: but he would not, neither did he eat bread with them. And it came to pass on the seventh day, that the child died. And the servants of David feared to tell him that the child was dead: for they said, Behold, while the child was *yet* alive, we spake unto him, and he would not hearken unto our voice: how will he then vex himself, if we tell him *that* the child is dead? But when David saw that his servants whispered, David perceived that the child was dead: therefore David said unto his servants, Is the child dead? And they said, He is dead. Then David arose from the earth, and washed, and anointed *himself*, and changed his apparel, and came *into* the 15 16 17 18 19 20

LORD] True confession needs but few words. Comp. Lk. xviii. 13. There is no attempt to excuse or palliate the sin. David is crushed by the sense of his guilt in the sight of God. Comp. Ps. xxxii. 5, li. 4. *thou shalt not die*] The sentence which he had pronounced on himself (*v.* 5) should not be executed, though he deserved to die as an adulterer and murderer (Lev. xx. 10, xxiv. 17).

14. The enemies of Jehovah would blaspheme Him, when they saw His chosen representative, the king of Israel, thus breaking His law. If he was not punished men might answer yes to the question, "May one be pardoned and retain the offence?" And therefore a long series of chastisements, beginning with the death of the child, must declare the Divine judgment on such sin.

15—23. The death of the child. **15.** *strake*] An archaism for *struck*, which most editions have. **16.** Such a prayer was not presumptuous, for God's threatenings like His promises are conditional. See Is. xxxviii. 1 ff.; Jonah iii. 7—10. *fasted*] Cp. Neh. i. 4; Esther iv. 16; Ps. xxxv. 13; Dan. ix. 3; Acts xiv. 23. *went in*] To his chamber (Matt. vi. 6), where he lay all night upon the floor, instead of sleeping on his bed. Comp. xiii. 31. The tense of the verbs *went in and lay all night* is frequentative, indicating that David did so repeatedly. **17.** *the elders of his house*] His oldest and most confidential servants. Comp. Gen. xxiv. 2, l. 7. and went *to him*] R.V. *and stood* **beside him.** **18.** *how* &c.] Or, as R.V. marg., *how then shall we tell him that the child is dead, so that he do himself some harm?* **19.** R.V. **whispered together.** **20.** He laid aside all the outward signs of mourning. Comp. Matt. vi. 17. Anointing the head and body with oil was and still is the regular practice in Eastern countries. Its discontinuance was a mark of mourning. Comp. ch.

house of the LORD, and worshipped: then he came to his own house; and when he required, they set bread before him, and
21 he did eat. Then said his servants unto him, What thing *is* this that thou hast done? thou didst fast and weep for the child, *while it was* alive; but when the child was dead, thou
22 didst rise and eat bread. And he said, While the child *was* yet alive, I fasted and wept: for I said, Who can tell *whether*
23 GOD will be gracious to me, that the child may live? But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me.
24 And David comforted Bath-sheba his wife, and went in unto her, and lay with her: and she bare a son, and he called his
25 name Solomon: and the LORD loved him. And he sent by the hand of Nathan the prophet; and he called his name Jedidiah, because of the LORD.
26 And Joab fought against Rabbah of the children of Ammon,
27 and took the royal city. And Joab sent messengers to David, and said, I have fought against Rabbah, and have taken the
28 city of waters. Now therefore gather the rest of the people together, and encamp against the city, and take it: lest I take

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xiv. 2; Is. lxi. 3. **22.** *Who* &c.] R.V. **Who knoweth whether the LORD will not be gracious to me.** **23.** *I shall go to him*] Comp. Gen. xxxvii. 35. A belief in the continued existence of the soul after death is implied by such words: but how far this falls short of the Christian hope of the Resurrection of the Body, and the Life Everlasting!

24, 25. The birth of Solomon. **24.** *he called*] Another reading is, *she called*. The name was given at the time of circumcision (Lk. i. 59, ii. 21). The Hebrew form of the name is *Shĕlōmōh*, the Sept. *Salōmōn*, which by the time of the N.T. had been shortened to Solomon. It signifies *peaceable*, and was given him in anticipation of the peace promised to Israel in his reign (1 Chron. xxii. 9). Solomon's birth is naturally related as the sequel to the preceding narrative, though in all probability it did not take place until some four or five years afterwards. See note on ch. v. 14. **25.** R.V. **And the LORD loved him; and he sent** &c. Jehovah commissioned Nathan (for the phrase cp. Ex. iv. 13) to give the boy a second name, which he did accordingly.

Jedidiah] That is, *Beloved of Jah*. Comp. Deut. xxxiii. 12; Ps. cxxvii. 2. It is derived from the same root as David, which means *beloved* or *darling*. The name was given **for the LORD'S sake** (R.V.), i.e. because Jehovah loved the child; and it served as a pledge to David that he was again received into God's favour.

26—31. [=1 Chron. xx. 1—3]. Capture of Rabbah. The narrative returns to the point at which it was left in ch. xi. 1.

26. *the royal city*] "The city of waters" (*v.* 27), or lower city on the river, as distinguished from "the city" (*v.* 28), i.e. the citadel.

27. *the city of waters*] So called from the streams flowing

the city, and it be called after my name. And David gathered 29
all the people together, and went to Rabbah, and fought against
it, and took it. And he took their king's crown from off his 30
head, the weight whereof *was* a talent of gold with the precious
stones: and it was *set* on David's head. And he brought forth
the spoil of the city in great abundance. And he brought forth 31
the people that *were* therein, and put *them* under saws, and
under harrows of iron, and under axes of iron, and made them
pass through the brickkiln: and thus did he unto all the cities
of the children of Ammon. So David and all the people re-
turned *unto* Jerusalem.

And it came to pass after this, that Absalom the son of 13

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through it. *after my name*] Rabbah might have been called "the city of Joab" as Zion was called "the city of David."

30. *their king's crown*] The word *Malcam*, rendered *their king*, may also be taken as a proper name (R.V. marg.). It occurs in Zeph. i. 5; Jer. xlix. 1, 3 (R.V.), as a form of the name of the Ammonite deity, Moloch or Milcom. But while it was natural for David to take and wear the king's crown, as the symbol of the subjection of the Ammonites to his rule, would he not have regarded the idol's crown with abhorrence, and have shrunk from wearing it?

a talent of gold] Estimated at more than 100 pounds. If this estimate is correct, it can never have been habitually worn.

with &c.] R.V. **and** *in it were* **precious stones.** *in great abundance*] R.V. **exceeding much.** **31.** *put* them *under saws*] In Chron. *cut them with saws* &c.: some cruel form of torture and execution. Comp. Heb. xi. 37. *harrows of iron*] Or, *threshing-sledges of iron:* sledges or frames armed on the underside with rollers or sharp spikes, used for the purpose of bruising the ears of corn and extracting the grain, and at the same time breaking up the straw into small pieces for use as fodder.

made them pass through the brickkiln] Burned them in brick-kilns. The phrase is chosen with reference to the idolatrous rite practised by the Ammonites, of "making their children pass through the fire" in honour of Moloch (2 Kings xxiii. 10). The alternative renderings of R.V. marg., *put them to saws* &c., *and made them labour at the brickkiln*, or, *brick mould;* i.e., set them to task-work of various kinds, are not probable, glad as we should be to think that David did not take such cruel vengeance upon his enemies. But the punishments which he inflicted must be judged according to the standard of the age in which they were inflicted. It was the age of retaliation, when the law of like for like—the *lex talionis*—prevailed (Jud. i. 7; Lev. xxiv. 19, 20). The Ammonites were a savage and brutal nation (1 Sam. xi. 1, 2; 2 Sam. x. 1—5; Amos i. 13), and they were treated as they were accustomed to treat others. In this respect David did not rise above the level of his own times.

XIII. **1—22.** Amnon's outrage. This chapter relates how the doom pronounced on David's house began to receive its fulfilment (1) by Amnon's shameful outrage, (2) by Absalom's murder of

David had a fair sister, whose name *was* Tamar; and Amnon
2 the son of David loved her. And Amnon was *so* vexed, that
he fell sick for his sister Tamar; for she *was* a virgin; and
3 Amnon thought it hard for him to do any thing to her. But
Amnon had a friend, whose name *was* Jonadab, the son of
Shimeah David's brother: and Jonadab *was* a very subtil man.
4 And he said unto him, Why *art* thou, *being* the king's son,
lean from day to day? wilt thou not tell me? And Amnon
said unto him, I love Tamar, my brother Absalom's sister.
5 And Jonadab said unto him, Lay *thee* down on thy bed, and
make thyself sick: and when thy father cometh to see thee,
say unto him, I pray thee, let my sister Tamar come, and give
me meat, and dress the meat in my sight, that I may see *it*,
6 and eat *it* at her hand. So Amnon lay down, and made himself
sick: and when the king was come to see him, Amnon said unto
the king, I pray thee, let Tamar my sister come, and make *me*
7 a couple of cakes in my sight, that I may eat at her hand. Then
David sent home to Tamar, saying, Go now *to* thy brother
8 Amnon's house, and dress him meat. So Tamar went *to* her
brother Amnon's house; and he was laid down. And she took
flour, and kneaded *it*, and made cakes in his sight, and did bake
9 the cakes. And she took a pan, and poured *them* out before
him; but he refused to eat. And Amnon said, Have out all
10 men from me. And they went out every man from him. And
Amnon said unto Tamar, Bring the meat *into* the chamber,
that I may eat of thine hand. And Tamar took the cakes which
she had made, and brought *them* into the chamber to Amnon
11 her brother. And when she had brought *them* unto him to eat,
he took hold of her, and said unto her, Come lie with me, my
12 sister. And she answered him, Nay, my brother, do not force
me; for no such thing ought to be done in Israel: do not thou
13 this folly. And I, whither shall I cause my shame to go? and
as for thee, thou shalt be as one of the fools in Israel. Now

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Amnon in revenge for that outrage. **1.** *Tamar*] Tamar and Absalom were the children of Maacah, daughter of Talmai king of Geshur (ch. iii. 3). Tamar means *palm-tree*. *Amnon*] David's firstborn, the son of Ahinoam the Jezreelitess. **3.** This narrative is a strong warning against the danger of evil companions. The clever but unprincipled friend is more likely to provide means for gratifying evil passions than help in resisting them.

Shimeah] Called *Shammah* in 1 Sam. xvi. 9. He had another son *Jonathan* (ch. xxi. 21). **5.** *make thyself sick*] R.V. **feign thyself sick,** and so in *v.* 6. *to see thee*] To visit in sickness, as in Ps. xli. 6; 2 Kings viii. 29. **12.** Israel was a holy nation, sanctified by the peculiar presence of Jehovah among them; and therefore all acts of unchastity were an offence against the true character and calling of the nation. **12, 13.** *Fool* denotes

therefore, I pray thee, speak unto the king; for he will not withhold me from thee. Howbeit he would not hearken unto 14
her voice: but, being stronger than she, forced her, and lay with her. ✝ Then Amnon hated her exceedingly; so that the 15
hatred wherewith he hated her *was* greater than the love wherewith he had loved her. And Amnon said unto her, Arise, be gone. And she said unto him, *There is* no cause: this evil in 16
sending me away *is* greater than the other that thou didst unto me. But he would not hearken unto her. Then he called his 17
servant that ministered unto him, and said, Put now this *woman* out from me, and bolt the door after her. And *she had* a garment 18
of divers colours upon her: for with such robes were the king's daughters *that were* virgins apparelled. Then his servant brought
her out, and bolted the door after her. And Tamar put ashes on 19
her head, and rent her garment of divers colours that *was* on her, and laid her hand on her head, and went on crying. And 20
Absalom her brother said unto her, Hath Amnon thy brother been with thee? but hold now thy peace, my sister: he *is* thy brother; regard not this thing. So Tamar remained desolate *in* her brother Absalom's house. But when king David heard 21
of all these things, he was very wroth. And Absalom spake 22

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not merely one who is stupid and ignorant, but one who has abandoned the fear of God, and cast off the restraints of decency and morality. Comp. ch. iii. 33; Ps. xiv. 1. *Folly* is a term specially applied to unchastity. *he will not withhold me from thee*] The marriage of half-brothers and sisters was permitted in patriarchal times, as is shewn by the example of Abraham and Sarah (Gen. xx. 12), but was expressly forbidden by the Mosaic law. Either the law was not strictly observed at this time, or Tamar, hoping to escape immediate violence, suggested that the king had a dispensing power, and might permit a regular marriage.

16. R.V. **Not so, because this great wrong in putting me forth is** *worse* **than the other that thou didst unto me:** or, (marg.), Think *not there is occasion for this great wrong in putting me forth*, which is worse &c. **18.** *a garment of divers colours*] The expression is used elsewhere only of Joseph's "coat of many colours" (Gen. xxxvii. 3, 23), and probably means *a long garment with sleeves*, (R.V. marg.), worn, it would seem, as an outer garment in place of the usual mantle. **19.** The ashes and the torn garments (1 Sam. iv. 12; Esth. iv. 1), and the hands clasped above the head (Jer. ii. 37), were all marks of grief and shame. *went* &c.] R.V. **went her way, crying aloud as she went;** not lamenting with silent tears, but with loud passionate shrieks and wailing. **20.** Absalom urged Tamar to bear the outrage patiently, intending to watch his own opportunity for revenge. To him, according to Oriental custom, belonged the duty of avenging his sister's wrongs. **21.** *was very wroth*] But in spite of his anger he did not punish the offence. David's indulgent treatment of his sons was a fruitful source of mischief

unto his brother Amnon neither good nor bad: for Absalom hated Amnon, because he had forced his sister Tamar.

23 And it came to pass after two full years, that Absalom had sheepshearers in Baal-hazor, which *is* beside Ephraim: and
24 Absalom invited all the king's sons. And Absalom came to the king, and said, Behold now, thy servant hath sheepshearers; let the king, I beseech thee, and his servants go with thy
25 servant. And the king said to Absalom, Nay, my son, let us not all now go, lest we be chargeable unto thee. And he
26 pressed him: howbeit he would not go, but blessed him. Then said Absalom, If not, I pray thee, let my brother Amnon go with us. And the king said unto him, Why should he go with
27 thee? But Absalom pressed him, that he let Amnon and all
28 the king's sons go with him. Now Absalom had commanded his servants, saying, Mark ye now when Amnon's heart is merry with wine, and when I say unto you, Smite Amnon; then kill him, fear not: have not I commanded you? be courageous, and
29 be valiant. And the servants of Absalom did unto Amnon as Absalom had commanded. Then all the king's sons arose, and every man gat him up upon his mule, and fled.

30 And it came to pass, while they *were* in the way, that tidings came to David, saying, Absalom hath slain all the king's sons,
31 and there is not one of them left. Then the king arose, and tare

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(cp. 1 Kings i. 6), and led in this case to the murder of Amnon, and ultimately to Absalom's rebellion. **22.** *neither good nor bad*] He made no allusion whatever to the matter, in order to quiet Amnon's suspicions. For the phrase cp. Gen. xxiv. 50, xxxi. 24.

23—29. Absalom's vengeance. **23.** Sheepshearing was and still is an occasion of festivity. Comp. 1 Sam. xxv. 7 ff.

Baal-hazor &c.] Possibly *Tell Asur*, five miles N.E. of Beth-el, and two miles N.W. of *et-Taiyibeh*, which is supposed to represent Ephraim. *Ephraim* is here the name of a town, not of the tribe territory. Comp. John xi. 54. **24.** A clever plan for removing all suspicion from Amnon's mind. **25.** *chargeable*] i.e. as R.V. **burdensome.** *Chargeable* is derived from *charge*, in the now obsolete sense of 'a load' or 'burden' (1 Thess. ii. 9). *blessed him*] Dismissed him with a farewell blessing. Comp. ch. xix. 39.

26. If David would not go himself, at least he might send his eldest son as his representative. David's reluctance to consent shews that he felt some misgivings that Absalom had not forgiven Amnon. **28. And Absalom commanded** &c. (R.V.). He felt himself bound to avenge his sister's wrong, and moreover welcomed the pretext for getting rid of Amnon, who stood between himself and the throne. **29.** *upon his mule*] Mules were generally used for riding at this time by persons of distinction, as Absalom (ch. xviii. 9), David, and Solomon (1 Kings i. 33, 38).

30—39. The news brought to David. Absalom's flight.

31. *tare*] R.V. **rent.** *lay on the earth*] Comp. ch. xii. 16.

his garments, and lay on the earth; and all his servants stood *by* with their clothes rent. And Jonadab, the son of Shimeah 32
David's brother, answered and said, Let not my lord suppose *that* they have slain all the young men the king's sons; for Amnon only is dead: for by the appointment of Absalom *this* hath been determined from the day that he forced his sister Tamar. Now therefore let not my lord the king take the thing to his 33
heart, to think *that* all the king's sons are dead: for Amnon only is dead. But Absalom fled. And the young man that kept 34
the watch lift up his eyes, and looked, and behold, there came much people by the way of the hill side behind him. And 35
Jonadab said unto the king, Behold, the king's sons come: as thy servant said, so it is. And it came to pass, as soon as he 36
had made an end of speaking, that behold, the king's sons came, and lift up their voice and wept: and the king also and all his servants wept very sore. But Absalom fled, and went to 37
Talmai, the son of Ammihud, king of Geshur. And *David* mourned for his son every day. So Absalom fled, and went to 38
Geshur, and was there three years. And *the soul of* king David 39
longed to go forth unto Absalom: for he was comforted concerning Amnon, seeing he was dead.

Now Joab the son of Zeruiah perceived that the king's 14
heart *was* toward Absalom. And Joab sent to Tekoah, and 2
fetcht thence a wise woman, and said unto her, I pray thee, feign thyself to be a mourner, and put on now mourning

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32. An illustration of the sagacity for which Jonadab was famous (*v.* 3). He at once rejects the exaggerations of rumour, and predicts accurately what had really happened. **34.** *that kept the watch*] At Jerusalem, probably in the tower over one of the gates. Comp. ch. xviii. 24. *much people*] The princes had been attended by a numerous retinue. **37.** Talmai was Absalom's grandfather. See on ch. iii. 3. R.V has **Ammihur,** with marg. note, 'Another reading is, *Ammihud.*' See on viii. 3. *for his son*] Amnon, not Absalom, is meant. His first feeling towards Absalom was one of anger.

XIV. **1—20.** Joab's stratagem to procure Absalom's recall. Why, it may be asked, if David was eager to recall Absalom, was Joab's scheme necessary? Why, if he was longing for a reconciliation, did he refuse to see him for two years after his return? Possibly political and judicial reasons prevented David from yielding to the dictates of affection; and perceiving this, Joab planned his scheme in order to give the king the excuse he desired for recalling his son; while the refusal to see Absalom was prompted by a hope that the "discipline of disapproval" might bring him to a state of penitence for his offence. **2. Tekoa** (R.V.) was situated on a lofty hill five miles S. of Bethlehem. The name survives in the modern *Tekûa.* Comp. ch. xxiii. 26; 2 Chr. xi. 6; Am. i. 1. *a wise woman*] Comp. ch. xx. 16. *feign thyself &c.*] Comp. the similar 'acted parable' in 1 Kings xx. 35—43.

apparel, and anoint not *thyself with* oil, but be as a woman
3 *that had* a long time mourned for the dead: and come to the
king, and speak on this manner unto him. So Joab put the
4 words in her mouth. And when the woman of Tekoah spake
to the king, she fell on her face to the ground, and did obei-
5 sance, and said, Help, O king. And the king said unto her,
What aileth thee? And she answered, I *am* indeed a widow
6 woman, and mine husband is dead. And thy handmaid had
two sons, and they two strove together in the field, and *there*
was none to part them, but the one smote the other, and slew
7 him. And behold, the whole family is risen against thine
handmaid, and they said, Deliver him that smote his brother,
that we may kill him, for the life of his brother whom he
slew; and we will destroy the heir also: and *so* they shall
quench my coal which is left, and shall not leave to my hus-
8 band *neither* name nor remainder upon the earth. And the
king said unto the woman, Go to thine house, and I will give
9 charge concerning thee. And the woman of Tekoah said unto
the king, My lord, O king, the iniquity *be* on me, and on my

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anoint not thyself] See note on ch. xii. 20. **3. and go in to the king** (R.V.). An interesting evidence of the simplicity of the times, when the king was thus directly accessible to his subjects who had causes to be tried or grievances to be redressed. Comp. ch. xv. 2; 1 Kings iii. 16. **4.** All the versions and many Hebrew MSS. read, as the sense requires, *And the woman of Tekoa* **came** *to the king, and fell* &c. *fell* &c.] It was and in some cases still is the practice in Oriental countries for a subject approaching the king, especially with any petition, to kneel down and bend forward until the forehead actually touches the ground. *did obeisance*] See note on ch. i. 2, and comp. the almost identical phrase in 1 Sam. xxv. 23. *Help*] Or, **Save.** Comp. 2 Kings vi. 26; Ps. xx. 9. **5.** *I* am *indeed*] R.V. **Of a truth I am.**

7. The whole clan demanded blood-revenge, according to the primitive custom, sanctioned and regulated by the Mosaic law. See Num. xxxv. 19; Deut. xix. 12, 13.

The woman puts the words **that we may kill him...and so destroy the heir also** (R.V.) into the mouth of her kinsmen, in order to make their conduct appear in the worst possible light, as actuated by covetousness and a desire to share the inheritance among themselves. Comp. Matt. xxi. 38. *my coal* &c.] The surviving son, who is the last hope for the continuance of his family, is compared to the live coal still left among the embers, by which the fire almost extinct may be rekindled. *shall not leave*...neither *name nor remainder*] The double negative is an archaism. R.V. **shall leave...neither name nor remainder.**

8. *I will give charge* &c.] Implying that her son should be protected. The king could reasonably grant a free pardon, as it was a case of manslaughter and not a premeditated murder. **9.** If there is any guilt in thus leaving bloodshed unavenged, may I and

father's house: and the king and his throne *be* guiltless.
And the king said, Whosoever saith *ought* unto thee, bring 10
him to me, and he shall not touch thee any more. Then said 11
she, I pray thee, let the king remember the LORD thy God,
that thou wouldest not suffer the revengers of blood to destroy
any more, lest they destroy my son. And he said, *As* the
LORD liveth, there shall not one hair of thy son fall to the
earth. Then the woman said, Let thine handmaid, I pray 12
thee, speak *one* word unto my lord the king. And he said,
Say on. And the woman said, Wherefore then hast thou 13
thought such a thing against the people of God? for the
king doth speak this thing as one which is faulty, in that the
king doth not fetch *home* again his banished. For we must 14
needs die, and *are* as water spilt on the ground, which cannot
be gathered up *again;* neither doth God respect *any* person:
yet doth he devise means, that *his* banished be not expelled
from him. Now therefore that I am come to speak of this 15
thing unto my lord the king, *it is* because the people have
made me afraid: and thy handmaid said, I will now speak

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my family bear the punishment. She wishes to lead the king up to a more definite promise, before she applies her parable to the case of Absalom. **11.** She presses for the further assurance of an oath in the name of Jehovah. *that thou wouldest not* &c.] R.V. **that the avenger of blood destroy not any more.** *one hair* &c.] Comp. 1 Sam. xiv. 45; 1 Kings i. 52; Matt. x. 30; Luke xxi. 18; Acts xxvii. 34. **12.** She has now to argue from the case of her son to that of Absalom. **13. Wherefore then hast thou devised** &c. (R.V.). David's resolution to keep Absalom in exile was an injury to the people of God, for he was the heir to the throne. *for the king* &c.] R.V. **for in speaking this word the king is as one which is guilty.** He had acknowledged the possibility of an exception to the general rule of punishment for murder, but he had not extended this exception to his own son, in spite of the strongest reasons for so doing.

14. Since life is uncertain and cannot be restored, and since God Himself sets the example of mercy, David should be reconciled to his son, before it is too late. For the simile of water spilt, comp. Ps. lviii. 7. *neither doth God* &c.] R.V. **neither doth God take away life, but deviseth means, that he that is banished be not an outcast from him.** The statement is general, but contains a pointed allusion to God's mercy in sparing David's own life when he had deserved death for adultery and murder, and devising a plan to bring him to repentance and so restore him to His presence. **15. Now therefore seeing that I am come to speak this word** (R.V.). There seems to be a studied ambiguity about this verse. If "the people" means the family who had demanded the surrender of her son, she is artfully returning to her own petition, to prevent the king from suspecting that her whole story is a fiction: if, as is more natural,

unto the king; it may be that the king will perform the
16 request of his handmaid. For the king will hear, to deliver
his handmaid out of the hand of the man *that would* destroy
17 me and my son together out of the inheritance of God. Then
thine handmaid said, The word of my lord the king shall now
be comfortable: for as an angel of God, so *is* my lord the
king to discern good and bad: therefore the LORD thy God
18 will be with thee. Then the king answered and said unto the
woman, Hide not from me, I pray thee, the thing that I shall
ask thee. And the woman said, Let my lord the king now
19 speak. And the king said, *Is not* the hand of Joab with thee
in all this? And the woman answered and said, *As* thy soul
liveth, my lord the king, none can turn to the right hand or
to the left from ought that my lord the king hath spoken: for
thy servant Joab, he bade me, and he put all these words in
20 the mouth of thine handmaid: to fetch about *this* form of
speech hath thy servant Joab done this thing: and my
lord *is* wise, according to the wisdom of an angel of God, to
know all *things* that *are* in the earth.
21 And the king said unto Joab, Behold now, I have done this
22 thing: go therefore, bring the young man Absalom again. And
Joab fell to the ground on his face, and bowed himself, and
thanked the king: and Joab said, To day thy servant knoweth
that I have found grace in thy sight, my lord, O king, in that
23 the king hath fulfilled the request of his servant. So Joab arose
24 and went to Geshur, and brought Absalom *to* Jerusalem. And

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"the people" means the nation, she is excusing her boldness on the ground that she was forced by them into speaking thus. **16.** *the inheritance of God*] The nation of Israel. Comp. 1 Sam. xxvi. 19; Deut. xxxii. 9. **17.** *The word* &c.] R.V. **Let, I pray thee, the word...be comfortable:** lit. *for rest.* Give me security from my enemies. *as an angel of God*] Or, *as the angel* &c. (R.V. marg.). Comp. *v.* 20; ch. xix. 27; and 1 Sam. xxix. 9. *to discern good and bad*] Lit. *to hear the good and the evil:* to listen patiently to all manner of petitions, and decide justly upon them. *therefore* &c.] The words are a prayer or blessing: **and the LORD thy God be with thee** (R.V.). **19.** Is not &c.] R.V. **Is the hand** &c. *none can turn* &c.] The king's words hit the mark precisely: he discerns the exact state of the case.

20. *to fetch about* &c.] R.V. **to change the face of the matter:** i.e. to alter the aspect of Absalom's relations to his father.

21—24. Joab sent to bring Absalom back. **21.** *I have done* &c.] I have granted thy wish and restored Absalom to favour. Another reading is, *thou hast done*, but the text, which is supported by the Sept. and Vulg., is certainly right. **22.** *bowed himself* &c.] R.V. **did obeisance, and blessed the king.** *his servant*] This is preferable to the other reading, *thy servant.* **24.** To recall Absalom without giving him a full pardon was a

the king said, Let him turn to his own house, and let him not see my face. So Absalom returned to his own house, and saw not the king's face.

But in all Israel there was none to be so much praised as 25
Absalom for his beauty: from the sole of his foot even to the
crown of his head there was no blemish in him. And when 26
he polled his head, (for it was at every year's end that he
polled *it:* because *the hair* was heavy on him, therefore he
polled it:) he weighed the hair of his head *at* two hundred
shekels after the king's weight. And unto Absalom there were 27
born three sons, and one daughter, whose name *was* Tamar:
she was a woman of a fair countenance.

So Absalom dwelt two full years in Jerusalem, and saw not 28
the king's face. Therefore Absalom sent for Joab, to have sent 29
him to the king; but he would not come to him: and when he
sent again the second time, he would not come. Therefore he 30
said unto his servants, See, Joab's field is near mine, and he
hath barley there; go and set it on fire. And Absalom's ser-
vants set the field on fire. Then Joab arose, and came to 31
Absalom unto *his* house, and said unto him, Wherefore have
thy servants set my field on fire? And Absalom answered Joab, 32
Behold, I sent unto thee, saying, Come hither, that I may send
thee to the king, to say, Wherefore am I come from Geshur?
it had been good for me *to have been* there still: now therefore
let me see the king's face; and if there be *any* iniquity in me,
let him kill me. So Joab came to the king, and told him: 33
and when he had called for Absalom, he came to the king, and
bowed himself on his face to the ground before the king: and
the king kissed Absalom.

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most dangerous policy. It could not fail to irritate him. *returned*] R.V. **turned.**

25—27. Absalom's person and family. **26.** *polled*] From *poll*, the head, comes the verb *to poll*, to cut the hair.

two hundred shekels &c.] If the royal shekel was the same as the sacred shekel, two hundred shekels would be about six pounds. But perhaps the royal shekel was smaller, or as is so often the case with numbers, there may be some error in the text.

27. *three sons*] Who are not named, because none of them lived to grow up. See ch. xviii. 18. *Tamar*] Who inherited the beauty as well as the name of her aunt.

28—33. Absalom readmitted to David's presence through Joab's mediation. **29.** Probably he did not choose to incur David's displeasure by visiting Absalom while he was still in disgrace.

30. *set it on fire*] Partly in revenge for Joab's refusal (cp. Jud. xv. 3—5), partly in the hope of bringing Joab to make a complaint in person. **32.** it had been *good*] R.V. **it were better for me to be there still.** **33.** *kissed Absalom*] As a pledge of reconciliation. See Gen. xxxiii. 4; xlv. 15; Luke xv. 20.

15 And it came to pass after this, that Absalom prepared him
2 chariots and horses, and fifty men to run before him. And
Absalom rose up early, and stood beside the way of the gate:
and it was *so*, *that when* any man that had a controversy
came to the king for judgment, then Absalom called unto him,
and said, Of what city *art* thou? And he said, Thy servant
3 *is* of one of the tribes of Israel. And Absalom said unto
him, See, thy matters *are* good and right; but *there is* no
4 man *deputed* of the king to hear thee. Absalom said more-
over, Oh that I were made judge in the land, that every man
which hath *any* suit or cause might come unto me, and I
5 would do him justice. And it was *so*, that when any man
came nigh *to him* to do him obeisance, he put forth his hand,
6 and took him, and kissed him. And on this manner did
Absalom to all Israel that came to the king for judgment: so
Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel.
7 And it came to pass after forty years, that Absalom said unto
the king, I pray thee, let me go and pay my vow, which I have
8 vowed unto the LORD, in Hebron. For thy servant vowed a
vow while I abode at Geshur in Syria, saying, If the LORD
shall bring me again indeed *to* Jerusalem, then I will serve

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XV—XIX. Absalom's rebellion. To this period may perhaps be referred Pss. iii, iv, xxvi, xxvii, xxviii, lxiii, lxiv.

XV. **1—6.** Absalom ingratiates himself with the people.

1. *chariots and horses*] R.V. **a chariot and horses.** Absalom imitated the magnificence of foreign monarchs, in order to make an impression on the people. Comp. Adonijah's practice (1 Kings i. 5), and see 1 Sam. viii. 11. **2.** *beside the way of the gate*] By the side of the road leading to the gate of the king's palace where he sat to transact business. Comp. ch. xix. 8. when *any man* &c.] R.V. **when any man had a suit which should come to the king for judgment.** *of one of the tribes of Israel*] Belongs to such and such a tribe or city: naming the particular one in each case. **3.** He artfully flatters each suitor by pronouncing a favourable decision on his case, condoles with him on the improbability of his obtaining a hearing, and hints how differently matters would be managed if he were in power.

5. Instead of allowing the people to do him homage as the king's son, he took them by the hand, and saluted them familiarly with a kiss. Comp. ch. xx. 9. **6.** *stole the hearts*] Robbed his father of the people's affection and transferred it to himself.

7—12. Absalom's conspiracy. **7.** *after forty years*] R.V. **at the end of forty years,** with marg. note, 'According to some ancient authorities, *four*.' *Forty* is quite unintelligible, and in place of it we must certainly read **four** with Josephus and some of the ancient versions. The four years are to be reckoned from the time of Absalom's reconciliation to David. They were spent in preparing for the conspiracy by ingratiating himself with the people in the way described in the preceding verses. **8.** *then I will serve*

the LORD. And the king said unto him, Go in peace. So he 9
arose, and went to Hebron. But Absalom sent spies through- 10
out all the tribes of Israel, saying, As soon as ye hear the
sound of the trumpet, then ye shall say, Absalom reigneth in
Hebron. And with Absalom went two hundred men out of 11
Jerusalem, *that were* called; and they went in their simplicity,
and they knew not any thing. And Absalom sent *for* Ahitho- 12
phel the Gilonite, David's counseller, from his city, *even* from
Giloh, while he offered sacrifices. And the conspiracy was
strong; for the people increased continually with Absalom.

And there came a messenger to David, saying, The hearts of 13
the men of Israel are after Absalom. And David said unto 14
all his servants that *were* with him at Jerusalem, Arise, and
let us flee; for we shall not *else* escape from Absalom: make
speed to depart, lest he overtake us suddenly, and bring evil
upon us, and smite the city with the edge of the sword. And 15
the king's servants said unto the king, Behold, thy servants

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the LORD] By offering a sacrifice in accordance with his vow. Comp. Jacob's vow (Gen. xxviii. 20—22). **10.** *the sound of the trumpet*] The signal for revolt and for the gathering of his supporters, like the hoisting of a standard in modern times. He was to be proclaimed king simultaneously all over the country. Comp. ch. xx. 1; 1 Kings i. 34; 2 Kings ix. 13. *reigneth*] R.V. **is king.** The choice of Hebron shews that Absalom expected to find his chief support in the tribe of Judah. It is probable that the old tribal jealousies had been revived, and that Judah resented its absorption into the nation at large. **11.** R.V. **two hundred men...that were invited, and went in their simplicity.** They were invited to the sacrificial feast as Absalom's guests, and would naturally be regarded as accomplices in the conspiracy. No doubt Absalom hoped that many of them, finding themselves thus compromised, would decide to join him; or failing this, they might be held as hostages. **12.** *Giloh*] One of a group of cities in the mountains of Judah, to the S. or S.W. of Hebron (Josh. xv. 51). *sent* for *Ahithophel*] The sense is no doubt right, but it cannot be got out of the Heb., which means *sent A.* (R.V. marg.). Probably some word has dropped out; the original reading may have been *sent and called Ahithophel.* Ahithophel has justly been regarded as a type of the arch-traitor Judas. Even if the words of Ps. xli. 9, quoted in John xiii. 18, were not written of Ahithophel, the parallel between his treachery and suicide and the treachery and suicide of Judas is too striking to be neglected.

sacrifices] R.V. **the sacrifices,** which were the ostensible object of his journey. To Ahithophel, who no doubt had already been sounded, he sent a special invitation to join him.

13—18. The king's flight from Jerusalem. Ps. iii, iv, lxiii, may have been composed during the Flight. **13.** *The hearts* &c.] Comp. *v.* 6; Jud. ix. 3. **14.** *for we shall not* else *escape*] R.V. **for else none of us shall escape.** For the moment David's

are ready to do whatsoever my lord the king shall appoint.
16 And the king went forth, and all his household after him.
And the king left ten women, *which were* concubines, to keep
17 the house. And the king went forth, and all the people after
18 him, and tarried *in* a place that *was* far off. And all his servants passed on beside him; and all the Cherethites, and all the Pelethites, and all the Gittites, six hundred men which came after him from Gath, passed on before the king.
19 Then said the king to Ittai the Gittite, Wherefore goest thou also with us? return to thy place, and abide with the king: for
20 thou *art* a stranger, and also an exile. *Whereas* thou camest *but* yesterday, should I *this* day make thee go up and down with us? seeing I go whither I may, return thou, and take
21 back thy brethren: mercy and truth *be* with thee. And Ittai answered the king, and said, *As* the LORD liveth, and *as* my lord the king liveth, surely in what place my lord the king

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courage seems to have failed him. **15.** *shall appoint*] R.V. **shall choose.** **16.** "There is no single day in the Jewish history of which so elaborate an account remains as that which describes this memorable flight. There is none, we may add, that combines so many of David's characteristics—his patience, his high-spirited religion, his generosity, his calculation: we miss only his daring courage. Was it crushed, for the moment, by the weight of parental grief, or of bitter remorse?" *Stanley.* May not the eye-witness who has preserved the picture of the scene with such minute and life-like detail have been the prophet Nathan? **17.** in *a place that* was *far off*] R.V. **in Beth-merhak,** or (marg.), *at the Far House:* on the outskirts of the city, before the road crossed the Kidron. Here David halted, while his troops passed in review before him, and crossed the Kidron. **18.** *the Gittites*] Apparently a body of Philistine followers whom David had brought from Gath, a supposition which is in accordance with the view that the Cherethites and Pelethites were Philistines. See note on ch. viii. 18.

19—23. Ittai's fidelity. **19.** *Ittai the Gittite*] A distinguished Philistine who had quite recently (*v.* 20) migrated from his home with his family and followers (*v.* 22) to enter David's service. As he shared the command of the army with Joab and Abishai (ch. xviii. 2), he must have been an experienced general. *return to thy place*] His new home in Jerusalem. R.V. omits *to thy place* here; and adds at the end of the verse, *return* **to thine own place;** following the order of the words in the Heb. *with the king*] David's meaning is that Ittai need not involve himself in the revolutions of a foreign country, but might take service under Absalom or any other reigning king without breach of faith.

20. Punctuate with R.V., **should I...make thee go up and down with us, seeing I go whither I may? return thou** &c. David goes forth, not knowing where he might find a home, as in the days of his flight from Saul. Cp. 1 Sam. xxiii. 13.

shall be, whether in death or life, even there *also* will thy servant be. And David said to Ittai, Go and pass over. And 22
Ittai the Gittite passed over, and all his men, and all the little ones that *were* with him. And all the country wept *with* 23
a loud voice, and all the people passed over: the king also *himself* passed over the brook Kidron, and all the people passed over, toward the way of the wilderness.

And lo Zadok also, and all the Levites *were* with him, bearing 24
the ark of the covenant of God: and they set down the ark of God; and Abiathar went up, until all the people had done passing out of the city. And the king said unto Zadok, Carry back 25
the ark of God *into* the city: if I shall find favour in the eyes of the LORD, he will bring me again, and shew me *both* it, and his habitation: but if he thus say, I have no delight in thee; 26
behold, *here am* I, let him do to me as seemeth good unto him. The king said also unto Zadok the priest, *Art not* thou 27
a seer? return *into* the city in peace, and your two sons with you, Ahimaaz thy son, and Jonathan the son of Abiathar.

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21. *in death or life*] R.V. **for death or for life.** Comp. Ruth's answer (Ruth i. 16, 17). **23.** *all the country*] The inhabitants who stood by to watch the procession, as distinguished from *all the people*, the army and retinue of followers accompanying David. *the brook Kidron*] The deep ravine on the east of Jerusalem, now commonly known as the Valley of Jehoshaphat, which separates the city from the Mount of Olives. *the way of the wilderness*] The road to Jericho through the northern part of the desert of Judah. Cp. *v.* 28 and ch. xvi. 2.

24—29. The Ark sent back to Jerusalem. **24.** The Ark halted, to allow the people who were still coming out of the city time to overtake the procession. Meanwhile Abiathar went on up the Mount of Olives, for some purpose which is not stated, possibly to watch the stream of people coming out of the city. He then returned to carry the Ark back. **25.** *his habitation*] Jerusalem, and in particular the tent where the Ark was kept, was "the habitation" (Ex. xv. 13), the earthly "dwelling-place," of Jehovah (1 Kings viii. 13), so far as that could be said of any special locality (1 Kings viii. 27). For the thought cp. Ps. xliii. 3. **26.** *I have no delight in thee*] For as he had sung in the confident faith of happier days, deliverance from his enemies depended on God's good pleasure. See ch. xxii. 20, and cp. 1 Kings x. 9. *behold* here am *I* &c.] Words of true resignation and humble submission to the will of God. He felt that he deserved this punishment for his sins. **27.** Art not *thou a seer*] An obscure expression variously explained, (1) **Art thou** not **a seer?** (R.V.) The high-priest is supposed to be called a *seer*, because he received Divine revelations by means of the Urim and Thummim; but there is no trace of such a use of the term elsewhere. (2) *Seest thou?* (R.V. marg.) i.e. Dost thou understand? a doubtful sense. (3) The Sept. has *See! thou shalt return*, which may be the right reading.

28 See, I will tarry in the plain of the wilderness, until there
29 come word from you to certify me. Zadok therefore and Abiathar carried the ark of God again *to* Jerusalem: and they tarried there.
30 And David went up by the ascent of *mount* Olivet, and wept as he went up, and had his head covered, and he went barefoot: and all the people that *was* with him covered every man
31 his head, and they went up, weeping as they went up. And *one* told David, saying, Ahithophel *is* among the conspirators with Absalom. And David said, O LORD, I pray thee, turn
32 the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness. And it came to pass, that *when* David was come to the top *of the mount*, where he worshipped God, behold, Hushai the Archite *came*
33 to meet him with his coat rent, and earth upon his head: unto whom David said, If thou passest on with me, then thou shalt
34 be a burden unto me: but if thou return *to* the city, and say

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28. *in the plain of the wilderness*] The level district of the Jordan valley near Jericho, called elsewhere "the plains of Jericho." Cp. Josh. v. 10; 2 Kings xxv. 5; and note on ch. ii. 29. But R.V., following another reading, gives **at the fords of the wilderness.** This is to be preferred, for a definite place must have been named at which the messenger was to find David, and the ford would be a most natural halting-place. Comp. xvii. 16. *to certify me*] To inform me how matters are going in the city.

30—37. Hushai commissioned to defeat Ahithophel.

30. mount *Olivet*] R.V. **the** *mount of* **Olives:** the name *mount Olivet* is derived from *mons oliveti* in the Vulgate of Acts i. 12. The "mount of Olives" is the ridge which rises on the east of Jerusalem above the Kidron ravine, screening the city from the desert country beyond. *had his head covered* &c.] The muffled head marks the deep grief which shuts itself up from the outer world: the bare feet—still a sign of mourning in the East—betoken affliction, self-humiliation, penitence. Comp. ch. xix. 4; Esth. vi. 12; Ezek. xxiv. 17. **32.** *the top* &c.] R.V. **the top** *of the ascent*, **where God was worshipped;** or, as marg., *where he was wont to worship God.* It was one of the high places, which were recognised as legitimate sanctuaries until the Temple was built. Cp. 1 Sam. vii. 17, ix. 13 *note;* 1 Kings iii. 2—4. *Hushai the Archite*] "The border of the Archites" (R.V.) is mentioned in Josh. xvi. 2, and a trace of the name is perhaps preserved in *Ain Arik*, about six miles W.S.W. of Bethel. Hushai had probably been absent from the city when the rebellion broke out, and had hastened back to join his master. His coming was in a manner the answer to David's prayer in *v.* 31. *with his coat rent* &c.] See note on ch. i. 2. The term rendered *coat* denotes the loose shirt or tunic, over which a cloak was usually worn. **33.** *unto whom David said*] R.V. **and David said unto him.** *a burden*] Perhaps Hushai was old and somewhat infirm. Comp. ch. xix. 35.

34. Stratagems of this kind, involving deliberate falsehood and

unto Absalom, I will be thy servant, O king; as I *have been* thy father's servant hitherto, so *will* I now also *be* thy servant: then mayest thou for me defeat the counsel of Ahithophel. And *hast thou* not there with thee Zadok and Abiathar the 35
priests? therefore it shall be, *that* what thing soever thou shalt hear out of the king's house, thou shalt tell *it* to Zadok and Abiathar the priests. Behold, *they have* there with them 36
their two sons, Ahimaaz Zadok's *son*, and Jonathan Abiathar's *son;* and by them ye shall send unto me every thing that ye can hear. So Hushai David's friend came *into* the city, and 37
Absalom came *into* Jerusalem.

And when David was a little past the top *of the hill*, behold, 16
Ziba the servant of Mephibosheth met him, with a couple of asses saddled, and upon them two hundred *loaves of* bread, and an hundred bunches of raisins, and an hundred of summer fruits, and a bottle of wine. And the king said unto Ziba, 2
What meanest thou by these? And Ziba said, The asses *be* for the king's household to ride on; and the bread and summer fruit for the young men to eat; and the wine, that such as be faint in the wilderness may drink. And the king said, 3
And where *is* thy master's son? And Ziba said unto the king, Behold, he abideth at Jerusalem: for he said, To day shall the house of Israel restore me the kingdom of my father. Then said the king to Ziba, Behold, thine *are* all that *per-* 4

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treachery, have been employed in all ages, but the morality of them cannot be approved. In connexion with this question it may be remarked, (1) that wrong actions are often related in Scripture without express condemnation, because the healthy and enlightened conscience can discern at once that they are wrong: (2) that many actions, allowable under the Old Testament dispensation, are not allowable to those who have received the light of Christ's revelation: (3) that Scripture gives no sanction to the doctrine that political and social morality are not to be governed by the same rules.

37. *David's friend*] "The king's friend" was a regular state-officer, the king's confidential adviser. Comp. 1 Chr. xxvii. 33 (R.V.); 1 Kings iv. 5.

XVI. **1—4.** David met by Ziba with a present. **1. The top** *of the ascent* (R.V.), as in xv. 32. *two hundred* loaves of *bread* &c.] Comp. Abigail's present (1 Sam. xxv. 18). *an hundred of summer fruits*] Probably cakes of dried figs or dates. Comp. Amos viii. 1. *a bottle of wine*] **A skin,** holding a considerable quantity. **3.** *thy master's son*] Mephibosheth is called the son, i.e. grandson, of Ziba's lord Saul in ch. ix. 9. David was hurt by Mephibosheth's apparent ingratitude. *for he said, To day* &c.] Ziba's story was a fiction, invented in the hope of getting a grant of Mephibosheth's estate, and in spite of its improbability, it passed muster in the confusion of the moment.

4. Behold, thine is all that pertaineth &c. (R.V.). David

tained unto Mephibosheth. And Ziba said, I humbly beseech thee *that* I may find grace in thy sight, my lord, O king.

5 And when king David came to Bahurim, behold, thence came out a man of the family of the house of Saul, whose name *was* Shimei, the son of Gera: he came forth, and cursed
6 still as he came. And he cast stones at David, and at all the servants of king David: and all the people and all the mighty
7 *men were* on his right hand and on his left. And thus said Shimei when he cursed, Come out, come out, thou bloody
8 man, and thou man of Belial: the LORD hath returned upon thee all the blood of the house of Saul, in whose stead thou hast reigned; and the LORD hath delivered the kingdom into the hand of Absalom thy son: and, behold, thou *art taken*
9 to thy mischief, because thou *art* a bloody man. Then said Abishai the son of Zeruiah unto the king, Why should this dead dog curse my lord the king? let me go over, I pray thee,
10 and take off his head. And the king said, What have I to do

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was hasty in thus treating his grant to Mephibosheth as forfeited by treason without a word of inquiry. This unreflecting impetuosity was a marked fault of his character. Comp. 1 Sam. xxv. 13 ff.

I humbly beseech thee &c.] R.V. **I do obeisance**;—equivalent to our "I lay myself at thy feet," an Oriental expression of gratitude: —**let me find favour in thy sight** &c. Comp. 1 Sam. i. 18.

5—14. David cursed by Shimei. **5.** *Bahurim*] See note on ch. iii. 16. *Shimei*] See ch. xix. 16—23; 1 Kings ii. 8, 9. His connexion with the clan of Saul accounts for the virulence of his hatred. **6.** The scene is described with an exactness which bespeaks an eye-witness. The road apparently was parallel to a ridge—"the hill side," *v.* 13—and separated from it by a deep but narrow ravine—"let me go *over*," *v.* 9—so that Shimei was out of easy reach, though within a stone's throw of David and his party.

7. R.V. **Begone, begone, thou man of blood, and man of Belial.** Away from the land and from thy kingdom into exile, thou murderer and ungodly man. *Belial*=worthlessness: *a man of B.*=an ungodly, lawless, wicked man. Comp. 1 Sam. i. 16.

8. Shimei probably refers to the deaths of Saul and his sons at Gilboa, of Abner and Ish-bosheth by treacherous murder, charging David with the guilt of crimes which he had repudiated and punished: possibly also to the execution of Saul's sons (ch. xxi. 1—9). He does not refer to Uriah, though David would feel that it was for his death that the curse was not undeserved. *to thy mischief*] *to* is the original reading of 1611; *in* of ordinary editions first appeared in the edition of 1629. *To thy mischief*=to thy hurt. But R.V. **in thine own mischief.** Comp. Ps. x. 2, lix. 12.

9. *Then said Abishai*] Consistently with his character on other occasions (1 Sam. xxvi. 8; 2 Sam. xix. 21). His fiery zeal reminds us of the Sons of Thunder (Luke ix. 54), and David's answer recalls Christ's answer to Peter (John xviii. 10, 11). *this dead dog*] See ch. ix. 8, iii. 8, and notes there. **10.** *What have I*

with you, ye sons of Zeruiah? so let him curse, because the LORD hath said unto him, Curse David. Who shall then say, Wherefore hast thou done so? And David said to Abishai, 11
and to all his servants, Behold, my son, which came forth of my bowels, seeketh my life: how much more now *may this* Benjamite *do it?* let him alone, and let him curse; for the LORD hath bidden him. It may be that the LORD will look on 12
mine affliction, and that the LORD will requite me good for his cursing this day. And as David and his men went by the 13
way, Shimei went along on the hill's side over against him, and cursed as he went, and threw stones at him, and cast dust. And the king, and all the people that *were* with him, 14
came weary, and refreshed themselves there.

And Absalom, and all the people the men of Israel, came *to* 15

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to do with you] 'What have we in common? leave me alone,' a phrase used to repel an unwelcome suggestion and repudiate participation in the thoughts and feelings of another. Comp. ch. xix. 22; John ii. 4. *ye sons of Zeruiah*] Joab probably seconded Abishai's request. For David's abhorrence of his nephews' ferocity, see ch. iii. 39. *so let him curse* &c.] According to another reading, **Because he curseth, and because** &c.; **who then shall say** (R.V.): or (marg.), *When he curseth, and when the Lord* &c.; *who then shall say* &c. **11.** this *Benjamite*] Who has some plausible ground for spite against a king who has succeeded to the honours once held by his family. *the* LORD *hath bidden him*] David recognises Shimei as the divinely appointed instrument for his chastisement, and therefore he can say, "the LORD hath bidden him." But Shimei's cursing was on his part sinful, and God commands no man to sin. God makes use of the evil passions of men to work out His purposes, but those evil passions are not thereby excused or justified. See, for example, Gen. xlv. 5; Acts ii. 23. Comp. notes on 1 Sam. xxvi. 19, and 2 Sam. xxiv. 1. **12.** *mine affliction*] This reading is supported by the Sept. and Vulg. Comp. Ps. xxv. 18. R.V. renders the Heb. text, **the wrong done unto me.** *will requite me good*] Comp. Ps. cix. 26—28. *for his cursing*] R.V. **for** *his* **cursing of me.** **13.** R.V. **So David** &c.: **and Shimei went along on the hill side.** See note on *v.* 6. **14.** R.V. **and he refreshed himself there.** There is no place mentioned to which *there* can refer. Either the name of the place has fallen out of the text, or the word for *weary* must be taken as a proper name, *to Ayĕphim* (R.V. marg.). No such place is known, but it would be an appropriate name for a caravansary or resting-place for travellers.

15—19. Absalom's entrance into Jerusalem. Hushai's offer of his services. **15.** The narrative of Absalom's proceedings is continued from ch. xv. 12, 37. He seems to have entered Jerusalem soon after David left it, perhaps about noon on the same day. *the men of Israel*] The term *Israel* is constantly applied to Absalom's followers in this narrative. It is used in a general sense, and not to signify the northern tribes as

16 Jerusalem, and Ahithophel with him. And it came to pass,
when Hushai the Archite, David's friend, was come unto Ab-
salom, that Hushai said unto Absalom, God save the king,
17 God save the king. And Absalom said to Hushai, *Is* this
thy kindness to thy friend? why wentest thou not with thy
18 friend? And Hushai said unto Absalom, Nay; but whom the
LORD, and this people, and all the men of Israel, choose, his
19 will I be, and with him will I abide. And again, whom should
I serve? *should I* not *serve* in the presence of his son? as I have
served in thy father's presence, so will I be in thy presence.
20 Then said Absalom to Ahithophel, Give counsel among you
21 what we shall do. And Ahithophel said unto Absalom, Go in
unto thy father's concubines, which he hath left to keep the
house; and all Israel shall hear that thou art abhorred of
thy father: then shall the hands of all that *are* with thee be
22 strong. So they spread Absalom a tent upon the top of the
house; and Absalom went in unto his father's concubines in
23 the sight of all Israel. And the counsel of Ahithophel, which
he counselled in those days, *was* as if a man had inquired
at the oracle of God: so *was* all the counsel of Ahithophel both
with David and with Absalom.

17 Moreover Ahithophel said unto Absalom, Let me now choose
out twelve thousand men, and I will arise and pursue after
2 David *this* night: and I will come upon him while he *is* weary
and weak handed, and will make him afraid: and all the
people that *are* with him shall flee; and I will smite the king
3 only: and I will bring back all the people unto thee: the man
whom thou seekest *is* as if all returned: *so* all the people shall
4 be *in* peace. And the saying pleased Absalom well, and all
5 the elders of Israel. Then said Absalom, Call now Hushai

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distinguished from Judah, for the strength of the insurrection, originally at any rate, lay in the south. See note on ch. xv. 10. Those who remained faithful to David are never called *the men of Judah*, but simply *the people* (ch. xv. 17, 23, 24, 30, xvi, xvii, xviii, xix). **16.** *God save the king*] Lit., *Let the king live.* Comp. 1 Sam. x. 24. **18.** *choose*] R.V. **have chosen.**

20—23. Ahithophel's Counsel. **21.** Ahithophel advised Absalom to make a decisive assumption of royal authority by publicly taking possession of the royal harem, as a claim of heirship and succession. His object was to make the breach between Absalom and his father irreparable.

XVII. **1—14.** Ahithophel's Counsel defeated by Hushai.

1. this *night*] The night following David's flight and Absalom's entrance into Jerusalem. Ahithophel's advice was excellent. The success of the rebellion would be ensured by striking a sudden blow and securing the king's person. **3.** The adherence of all the people will be ensured by the removal of David. If that is effected, there will be no civil war. **4.** *the elders*] Who were

the Archite also, and let us hear likewise what he saith.
And when Hushai was come to Absalom, Absalom spake unto 6
him, saying, Ahithophel hath spoken after this manner: shall
we do *after* his saying? if not; speak thou. And Hushai said 7
unto Absalom, The counsel that Ahithophel hath given *is*
not good at this time. For, (said Hushai,) thou knowest thy 8
father and his men, that they *be* mighty *men*, and they *be*
chafed in their minds, as a bear robbed of her whelps in the
field: and thy father *is* a man of war, and will not lodge
with the people. Behold, he is hid now in some pit, or in 9
some *other* place: and it will come to pass, when *some* of them
be overthrown at the first, that whosoever heareth *it* will say,
There is a slaughter among the people that follow Absalom.
And he also *that is* valiant, whose heart *is* as the heart of a 10
lion, shall utterly melt: for all Israel knoweth that thy father
is a mighty *man*, and *they* which *be* with him *are* valiant men.
Therefore I counsel *that* all Israel be generally gathered unto 11
thee, from Dan even to Beer-sheba, as the sand that *is* by
the sea for multitude; and *that* thou go to battle in thine
own person. So shall we come upon him in some place where 12
he shall be found, and we *will light* upon him as the dew falleth
on the ground: and of him and of all the men that *are* with
him there shall not be left so much as one. Moreover, if he be 13
gotten into a city, then shall all Israel bring ropes to that city,
and we will draw it into the river, until there be not one small
stone found there. And Absalom and all the men of Israel 14
said, The counsel of Hushai the Archite *is* better than the

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sitting in council with Absalom. **7.** R.V. **The counsel that Ahithophel hath given this time is not good:** in contrast to his previous counsel (ch. xvi. 21), which Hushai pretends to approve. **8.** *For, said Hushai*] R.V. **Hushai said moreover.** *chafed in their minds*] Lit. *bitter of soul:* embittered and exasperated. Comp. Jud. xviii. 25; 1 Sam. xxii. 2. *as a bear robbed of her whelps*] Proverbial for its ferocity. Comp. Prov. xvii. 12; Hos. xiii. 8. **9.** *be overthrown*] R.V. **be fallen,** or, (marg.) *when he falleth upon them.* **10.** R.V. **And even he that is valiant.** **11.** *be generally gathered*] Generally = 'as a whole': as we might say, "that there be a general gathering of all Israel." *from Dan even to Beer-sheba*] See note on 1 Sam. iii. 20. *the sand* &c.] A common figure for an innumerable multitude. Comp. Gen. xxii. 17, xli. 49; 1 Sam. xiii. 5; Ps. lxxviii. 27; &c. *and* that *thou go* &c.] Or, as R.V. marg., *and that thy presence* (Heb. *face*) *go to the battle.* **12.** *as the dew*] As the innumerable drops of dew settle on the ground unseen and unheard, so will our vast army completely overwhelm him without perceptible effort. **14.** Hushai's scheme was cleverly devised to appeal to Absalom's vanity and love of display. It seemed safe and easy: it was a far more attractive idea for Absalom to

counsel of Ahithophel. For the LORD had appointed to defeat the good counsel of Ahithophel, to the intent that the LORD might bring evil upon Absalom.

15 Then said Hushai unto Zadok and to Abiathar the priests, Thus and thus did Ahithophel counsel Absalom and the elders
16 of Israel; and thus and thus have I counselled. Now therefore send quickly, and tell David, saying, Lodge not *this* night in the plains of the wilderness, but speedily pass over; lest the king be swallowed up, and all the people that *are* with him.
17 Now Jonathan and Ahimaaz stayed by En-rogel; for they might not be seen to come into the city: and a wench went
18 and told them; and they went and told king David. Nevertheless a lad saw them, and told Absalom: but they went both of them away quickly, and came to a man's house in Bahurim, which had a well in his court; whither they went
19 down. And the woman took and spread a covering over the well's mouth, and spread ground corn thereon; and the thing
20 was not known. And when Absalom's servants came to the woman to the house, they said, Where *is* Ahimaaz and Jonathan? And the woman said unto them, They be gone over the brook of water. And when they had sought and could

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march in person against David at the head of an immense army, than to let Ahithophel complete the revolution by a decisive action at once.

15—22. Hushai sends word to David by Jonathan and Ahimaaz.

16. *Lodge not* this *night*] A prudent precaution, for Absalom might change his mind, and follow Ahithophel's counsel after all. *in the plains*] R.V. **at the fords.** See note on ch. xv. 28.

17. R.V. **Now Jonathan and Ahimaaz stayed by En-rogel; and a maidservant used to go and tell them; and they went and told king David: for they might not be seen to come into the city.** Or, as R.V. marg., making the words part of Hushai's speech: *Now J. and A. stay by E.; so let the maidservant go and tell them, and let them go and tell king David; for they may not be seen to come into the city.* *En-rogel*] That is, "The Fuller's Fountain," probably the modern "Fountain of the Virgin," in the valley of the Kidron, just outside the city on the south-east. (Josh. xv. 7, xviii. 16.) **18.** *a well*] A cistern, dry at the time. The existence of numerous rock-cut cisterns with narrow mouths at *Almît*, the probable site of Bahurim, illustrates the incident. **19.** *a covering*] R.V. **the covering,** either the usual cover of the cistern, or perhaps the curtain which hung in the doorway. *spread* &c.] R.V. **strewed bruised corn thereon; and nothing was known.** *ground corn*] Bruised or husked wheat, which she spread out as if to dry. **20.** The woman sent the pursuers off in the wrong direction, and then at once despatched Jonathan and Ahimaaz. Comp. the deceit practised by Rahab (Josh. ii. 4 ff.), and by Michal (1 Sam. xix. 12—17). Holy Scripture affirms the universal

not find *them*, they returned *to* Jerusalem. And it came to pass, after they were departed, that they came up out of the well, and went and told king David, and said unto David, Arise, and pass quickly over the water: for thus hath Ahithophel counselled against you. Then David arose, and all the people that *were* with him, and they passed over Jordan: by the morning light there lacked not one *of them* that was not gone over Jordan. 21 22

And when Ahithophel saw that his counsel was not followed, he saddled *his* ass, and arose, and gat him *home* to his house, to his city, and put his household in order, and hanged himself, and died, and was buried in the sepulchre of his father. 23

Then David came to Mahanaim. And Absalom passed over Jordan, he and all the men of Israel with him. And Absalom made Amasa captain of the host instead of Joab: which Amasa *was* a man's son, whose name *was* Ithra an Israelite, that went in to Abigal the daughter of Nahash, sister to Zeruiah Joab's mother. So Israel and Absalom pitched *in* the land of Gilead. 24 25 26

And it came to pass, when David was come to Mahanaim, 27

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duty of Truth without any exception (Lev. xix. 11), nor can it be understood to sanction breaches of this general law by recording them without express disapproval. See also note on ch. xv. 34.

23. The suicide of Ahithophel. **23.** R.V. **And gat him home, unto his city, and set his house in order**: arranged his affairs and made his will. Comp. 2 Kings xx. 1. *hanged himself*] Like Judas (Matt. xxvii. 5). It is the first deliberate suicide on record, and was prompted by mortification at the rejection of his counsel; by the chagrin of baffled ambition; by the conviction that now the rebellion would inevitably fail, and that he would only live to suffer a traitor's death.

24—26. Progress of the Rebellion. **24.** *Mahanaim* (see note on ch. ii. 8) was chosen for David's head-quarters as the most important city in the trans-Jordanic country, which was evidently the least disaffected. *And Absalom &c.*] Before this a considerable interval must have elapsed, during which Absalom was anointed (ch. xix. 10), and a levy of the nation raised, while David had time to organize his forces and establish himself at Mahanaim.

25. *Amasa*] Supposed by some to be the same as *Amasai* who came to David at Hebron (1 Chr. xii. 16—18). *Ithra an Israelite*] Called in 1 Chr. ii. 17 *Jether the Ishmaelite*. *Jether* and *Ithra* are different forms of the same name: and *Ishmaelite* should probably be read here in place of *Israelite*. *Abigal the daughter of Nahash*] Comp. 1 Chr. ii. 16, 17. Probably Nahash was the first husband of Jesse's wife, so that Abigal and Zeruiah were step-sisters to David. Note that Amasa and Joab were cousins.

27—29. Loyal reception of David at Mahanaim. **27.** The narrative is continued from *v.* 24. What follows happened imme-

that Shobi the son of Nahash of Rabbah of the children of Ammon, and Machir the son of Ammiel of Lo-debar, and Bar-
28 zillai the Gileadite of Rogelim, brought beds, and basons, and earthen vessels, and wheat, and barley, and flour, and parched
29 *corn*, and beans, and lentiles, and parched *pulse*, and honey, and butter, and sheep, and cheese of kine, for David, and for the people that *were* with him, to eat: for they said, The people *is* hungry, and weary, and thirsty, in the wilderness.

18 And David numbered the people that *were* with him, and set captains of thousands and captains of hundreds over them.
2 And David sent forth a third part of the people under the hand of Joab, and a third part under the hand of Abishai the son of Zeruiah, Joab's brother, and a third part under the hand of Ittai the Gittite. And the king said unto the people,
3 I will surely go forth with you myself also. But the people answered, Thou shalt not go forth: for if we flee away, they will not care for us; neither if half of us die, will they care for us: but now *thou art* worth ten thousand of us: therefore
4 now *it is* better that thou succour us out of the city. And the king said unto them, What seemeth you best I will do. And the king stood by the gate side, and all the people came
5 out by hundreds and by thousands. And the king commanded

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diately on David's arrival there. *Shobi*] Probably a brother of Hanun (ch. x. 1), who had been invested with some kind of dependent chieftainship by David after the conquest of the Ammonites. *Machir*] Comp. ch. ix. 4. He who had entertained Jonathan's son now shews hospitality to Jonathan's friend. *Barzillai*] See ch. xix. 31—40; 1 Kings ii. 7; Ezra ii. 61—63; Neh. vii. 63. The site of Rogelim is unknown. **29.** *butter*] Curdled milk, called *leben* by the modern Arabs, and greatly esteemed as a refreshing drink. Cp. Jud. v. 25.

XVIII. **1—8.** The Battle in the forest of Ephraim. The events here recorded cannot have followed immediately on David's arrival at Mahanaim. An interval of some weeks must be assumed, during which the rival armies were mustered and organized. See note on ch. xvii. 24. **1.** *numbered*] Mustered and reviewed them. *thousands...hundreds*] The usual military divisions (1 Sam. viii. 12, xxii. 7; Num. xxxi. 14); corresponding originally to the civil divisions instituted by Moses (Ex. xviii. 25). See on 1 Sam. x. 19. **2.** The division of an army into three bodies seems to have been a common practice. See Jud. vii. 16, ix. 43; 1 Sam. xi. 11. David intended to take the chief command in person. **3.** Compare the protest of David's followers on an earlier occasion (ch. xxi. 17). *but now* &c.] R.V. **but thou art worth ten thousand of us.** So the Sept. and Vulg. The Heb. text has, *for now are there ten thousand such as we;* but, it is implied, none besides like thee. *that thou succour us* &c.] R.V. **that thou be ready to succour us,** by sending reinforce-

Joab and Abishai and Ittai, saying, *Deal* gently for my sake with the young man, *even* with Absalom. And all the people heard when the king gave all the captains charge concerning Absalom. So the people went out *into* the field against Israel: 6
and the battle was in the wood of Ephraim; where the people 7
of Israel were slain before the servants of David, and there was there a great slaughter that day *of* twenty thousand *men*. For the battle was there scattered over the face of all the 8
country: and the wood devoured more people that day than the sword devoured.

And Absalom met the servants of David. And Absalom rode 9
upon a mule, and the mule went under the thick boughs of a great oak, and his head caught hold of the oak, and he was taken up between the heaven and the earth; and the mule that *was* under him went away. And a certain man saw *it*, and told 10
Joab, and said, Behold, I saw Absalom hanged in an oak. And 11
Joab said unto the man that told him, And behold, thou sawest *him*, and why didst thou not smite him there to the ground? and I would have given thee ten *shekels of* silver, and a girdle. And the man said unto Joab, Though I should receive a thousand 12
shekels of silver in mine hand, *yet* would I not put forth mine hand against the king's son: for in our hearing the king charged

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ments, and securing their retreat in case of a defeat. **5.** *all the people heard*] Comp. "in our hearing" in *v.* 12. **6.** *the wood of Ephraim*] **The forest of Ephraim** (R.V.) might naturally be expected to mean the great forest covering the high lands of central Palestine in which the tribe of Ephraim settled (Josh. xvii. 15—18). But all the circumstances are in favour of supposing that the battle was fought on the eastern side of the Jordan, and that "the wood of Ephraim" was some part of the great forests of Gilead.

8. *scattered*] R.V. **spread.** *the wood devoured more* &c.] Either they perished in the pits and precipices and morasses of the forest, or owing to the nature of the ground more were slain in the pursuit through the forest than in the actual battle.

9—18. Absalom's death. **9. And Absalom chanced to meet David's servants: now Absalom was riding upon his mule, and the mule** &c. In the course of the flight Absalom found himself among enemies: he turned to escape into the denser part of the forest. The mule which he rode—perhaps David's own—was a mark of royalty (1 Kings i. 33, 38). *a great oak*] Or, **the great terebinth;** the article seems to shew that the tree was well known in after times. *his head* &c.] His head was caught in the forked boughs of the tree, and he hung there, stunned and helpless. Perhaps his long, thick hair got entangled, but there is nothing to support the common idea that he was suspended merely by his hair. **11.** *ten* shekels] R.V. **ten** *pieces*. Probably shekels are meant. The shekel weighed about half an ounce; but its real value at the time cannot be fixed. *a girdle*] An essential article of Oriental dress, often of costly materials and highly orna-

thee and Abishai and Ittai, saying, Beware *that* none *touch*
13 the young man Absalom. Otherwise I should have wrought falsehood against mine own life: for there is no matter hid from the king, and thou thyself wouldest have set thyself
14 against *me*. Then said Joab, I may not tarry thus with thee. And he took three darts in his hand, and thrust them through the heart of Absalom, while he *was* yet alive in the midst of
15 the oak. And ten young men that bare Joab's armour com-
16 passed about and smote Absalom, and slew him. And Joab blew the trumpet, and the people returned from pursuing after
17 Israel: for Joab held back the people. And they took Absalom, and cast him into a great pit in the wood, and laid a very great heap of stones upon him: and all Israel fled every one to his tent.

18 Now Absalom in his lifetime had taken and reared up for himself a pillar, which *is* in the king's dale: for he said, I have no son to keep my name in remembrance: and he called the pillar after his own name: and it is called unto this day, Absalom's place.

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mented. Comp. 1 Sam. xviii. 4. **12.** *Beware* &c.] Lit. *Have a care, whosoever ye be, of the young man Absalom.* **13.** R.V. **Otherwise if I had dealt falsely against his life, (and there is no matter hid from the king,) then thou thyself wouldest have stood aloof,** i.e. if I had slain him in defiance of the king's commands it would certainly have come to the king's ears, and thou wouldest not have taken my part. The man was well aware of Joab's unscrupulous character. Another reading is *my life;* i.e. if I had been false to my own interest and risked my life. The last clause may also be rendered as in A.V. **15.** Absalom's death was the surest means of putting an end to the rebellion; and Joab probably took credit for serving his country while he satisfied his private revenge (ch. xiv. 30). **16.** *blew the trumpet*] Sounded the recall to stop further pursuit. Comp. ch. ii. 28, xx. 22.

17. R.V. **and cast him into the great pit in the forest, and raised over him a very great heap of stones.** A monument of shame over the rebel's grave, as over that of Achan (Josh. vii. 26), and the king of Ai (Josh. viii. 29). Some think it was symbolic of the stoning which was the penalty of a rebel son (Deut. xxi. 20, 21). *to his tent*] To his home. The use of the word *tent* is a relic of primitive nomad life. Comp. ch. xx. 1, 22. **18.** *the king's dale*] In Gen. xiv. 17 "the king's dale" is given as an alternative name for "the valley of Shaveh" in which the king of Sodom met Abram, apparently near Jerusalem. Josephus says that Absalom's monument was two furlongs distant from Jerusalem, and the Tomb of Absalom is still shewn in the valley of the Kidron. But this building is of Roman work; and it is very doubtful if it marks the site of Absalom's monument. *I have no son*] His three sons (ch. xiv. 27) must have all died young. **and it is called Absalom's monument,**

Then said Ahimaaz the son of Zadok, Let me now run, and 19
bear the king tidings, how that the LORD hath avenged him
of his enemies. And Joab said unto him, Thou *shalt* not 20
bear tidings this day, but thou shalt bear tidings another day:
but this day thou shalt bear no tidings, because the king's
son is dead. Then said Joab to Cushi, Go tell the king what 21
thou hast seen. And Cushi bowed himself unto Joab, and
ran. Then said Ahimaaz the son of Zadok yet again to Joab, 22
But howsoever, let me, I pray thee, also run after Cushi. And
Joab said, Wherefore wilt thou run, my son, seeing that thou
hast no tidings ready? But howsoever, *said he*, let me run. 23
And he said unto him, Run. Then Ahimaaz ran *by* the way
of the plain, and overran Cushi. And David sat between the 24
two gates: and the watchman went *up* to the roof over the
gate unto the wall, and lift up his eyes, and looked, and
behold a man running alone. And the watchman cried, and 25
told the king. And the king said, If he *be* alone, *there is*
tidings in his mouth. And he came apace, and drew near.
And the watchman saw another man running: and the watch- 26
man called unto the porter, and said, Behold *another* man
running alone. And the king said, He also bringeth tidings.
And the watchman said, Me thinketh the running of the fore- 27
most *is* like the running of Ahimaaz the son of Zadok. And
the king said, He *is* a good man, and cometh with good

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unto this day (R.V.). Comp. 1 Sam. xv. 12. What a contrast between this splendid cenotaph, and the heap of stones which marked the rebel's grave in the forest of Ephraim.

19—32. The news carried to David. **19.** *hath avenged him* &c.] Lit. *judged him out of the hand of his enemies:* pronounced a favourable verdict in his cause and delivered him. Comp. 1 Sam. xxiv. 15; Ps. xliii. 1. **20.** R.V. **Thou shalt not be the bearer of tidings this day.** Joab would not let Ahimaaz have the thankless task of carrying news which to the king would be no good news. **21.** *Cushi*] R.V. **the Cushite,** an Ethiopian slave in Joab's service, who would have little to lose by the king's displeasure. **22.** *But howsoever*] R.V. **But come what may.** *thou hast no tidings ready*] R.V. **thou wilt have no reward for the tidings.** Or, as marg., *hast no sufficient tidings.*

23. But come what may, *said he,* **I will run** (R.V.). by *the way of the plain*] "The Plain" is the technical term for the floor of the valley through which the Jordan runs. Probably Ahimaaz struck down into the Jordan valley, and ran by a longer but easier route to Mahanaim, while the Cushite took the direct but more difficult route over the hills. **24.** *between the two gates*] In the space between the inner and outer gates of the city gateway. *to the roof* &c.] To that side of the flat roof of the gateway which was in the outer wall of the city. **25.** *If he* be *alone* &c.] If the army had been routed a number of fugitives would have been seen coming together. **27.** *He* is *a good man*

28 tidings. And Ahimaaz called, and said unto the king, All
is well. And he fell down to the earth upon his face before
the king, and said, Blessed *be* the LORD thy God, which hath
delivered up the men that lift up their hand against my lord
29 the king. And the king said, *Is* the young man Absalom
safe? And Ahimaaz answered, When Joab sent the king's
servant, and *me* thy servant, I saw a great tumult, but I knew
30 not what *it was*. And the king said *unto him*, Turn aside,
31 *and* stand here. And he turned aside, and stood still. And
behold, Cushi came; and Cushi said, Tidings, my lord the
king: for the LORD hath avenged thee *this* day of all them
32 that rose up against thee. And the king said unto Cushi,
Is the young man Absalom safe? And Cushi answered, The
enemies of my lord the king, and all that rise against thee
33 to do *thee* hurt, be as *that* young man *is*. And the king was
much moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate, and
wept: and as he went, thus he said, O my son Absalom, my
son, my son Absalom: would God I had died for thee, O
Absalom, my son, my son.

19 And it was told Joab, Behold, the king weepeth and mourn-
2 eth for Absalom. And the victory that day was *turned* into
mourning unto all the people: for the people heard say that
3 day *how* the king was grieved for his son. And the people gat
them by stealth that day *into* the city, as people being ashamed
4 steal away when they flee in battle. But the king covered his

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&c.] The king rightly judged that Joab would not choose a distinguished messenger like Ahimaaz to carry bad news (*v.* 20).

28. *All is well*] Lit. **Peace!** The usual word of greeting had special significance at such a time. *he fell down*] R.V. **he bowed himself before the king with his face to the earth:** an act of homage to the king. See note on ch. xiv. 4, and comp. 1 Sam. xx. 41, xxv. 23. **29.** Taking up the exclamation of Ahimaaz, David asks, **Is it well** (lit., Is there *peace*) **with the young man Absalom?** Cp. 2 Kings iv. 26. *the king's servant, and* me *thy servant*] In this rendering, which is retained in R.V. marg., *the king's servant* means the Cushite, to whom Ahimaaz points as he comes up. But R.V. has, **the king's servant, even me thy servant.** **31.** *Tidings* &c.] R.V. **Tidings for my lord the king.** **33.** David's mourning for Absalom. This outburst of grief was due not only to the tenderness of affection, which was so striking a trait in David's character, but to the bitterness of the thought that this terrible catastrophe was the fruit and the punishment of his own crimes.

XIX. **1—8.** David roused from his grief by Joab. **2.** *the victory*] Lit. *the salvation* or *deliverance*. Cp. 1 Sam. ix. 16, xi. 3; 2 Sam. iii. 18, &c. R.V. more forcibly; **the people heard say that day, The king grieveth for his son.** **3.** Out of respect for the king's sorrow the army stole into the city silently in

face, and the king cried *with* a loud voice, O my son Absalom, O Absalom, my son, my son. And Joab came *into* the house to the king, and said, Thou hast shamed *this* day the faces of all thy servants, which *this* day have saved thy life, and the lives of thy sons and of thy daughters, and the lives of thy wives, and the lives of thy concubines; in that thou lovest thine enemies, and hatest thy friends: for thou hast declared *this* day, that thou regardest neither princes nor servants: for *this* day I perceive, that if Absalom had lived, and all we had died *this* day, then it had pleased thee well. Now therefore arise, go forth, and speak comfortably unto thy servants: for I swear by the LORD, if thou go not forth, there will not tarry one with thee *this* night: and that *will be* worse unto thee than all the evil that befell thee from thy youth until now. Then the king rose, and sat in the gate. And they told unto all the people, saying, Behold, the king doth sit in the gate. And all the people came before the king: for Israel had fled every man to his tent.

And all the people were at strife throughout all the tribes of Israel, saying, The king saved us out of the hand of our enemies, and he delivered us out of the hand of the Philistines; and now he is fled out of the land for Absalom. And Absalom,

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small parties, like disgraced fugitives, instead of entering in military order with shouts of triumph for the victory. **5.** The crisis illustrates Joab's practical sagacity, as well as his hard unsympathetic nature. Exaggerated and unfeeling as his speech was, it roused David to a sense of his duty, and saved him from flinging away the fruits of the victory. *Thou hast shamed* &c.] Disappointed their hopes of rejoicing for the victory: treated them like offenders instead of benefactors. *have saved thy life* &c.] For had Absalom been victorious he would doubtless have put to death all rival claimants to the throne, and possibly other members of the king's household. Comp. Jud. ix. 5; 1 Kings xv. 29, xvi. 11; 2 Kings x. 6, xi. 1. **6.** R.V. **in that thou lovest them that hate thee, and hatest them that love thee.** *that thou regardest* &c.] R.V. **that princes and servants are nought unto thee.** The captains of the army (ch. xviii. 1, 5), and the soldiers. **7.** *speak comfortably* &c.] Encourage them, and appease their discontent, for they will not continue faithful to a king who allows a private grief to outweigh his gratitude for their services. *that befell*] R.V. **that hath befallen.** **8.** *in the gate*] Where kings and rulers were accustomed to give audience to their subjects. See note on ch. xv. 2. *for Israel* &c.] The words should begin a new sentence and paragraph, as in R.V., **Now Israel had fled** &c., resuming the narrative from ch. xviii. 17, and preparing the way for the account which follows. *Israel*, that part of the nation which had followed Absalom, is contrasted with *the people*, i.e. David's army.

9—15. Negotiations for David's restoration. His return.

10. The anointing of Absalom is not elsewhere mentioned. At

whom we anointed over us, is dead in battle. Now therefore why
11 speak ye not a word of bringing the king back? And king David
sent to Zadok and to Abiathar the priests, saying, Speak unto the
elders of Judah, saying, Why are ye the last to bring the king
back to his house? seeing the speech of all Israel is come to
12 the king, *even* to his house. Ye *are* my brethren, ye *are* my
bones and my flesh: wherefore then are ye the last to bring
13 back the king? And say ye to Amasa, *Art* thou not *of* my bone,
and *of* my flesh? God do so to me, and more also, if thou be not
captain of the host before me continually in the room of Joab.
14 And he bowed the heart of all the men of Judah, *even* as *the*
heart of one man; so that they sent *this word* unto the king,
15 Return thou, and all thy servants. So the king returned, and
came to Jordan. And Judah came to Gilgal, to go to meet the
king, to conduct the king over Jordan.
16 And Shimei the son of Gera, a Benjamite, which *was* of
Bahurim, hasted and came down with the men of Judah to
17 meet king David. And *there were* a thousand men of Benjamin
with him, and Ziba the servant of the house of Saul, and his
fifteen sons and his twenty servants with him; and they went

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the end of the verse the Sept. adds, "And the word of all Israel came to the king," that is, he received communications from Israel. The clause is needed to introduce *v.* 11. **11.** *the elders of Judah*] The representatives of the tribe, who would naturally be its leaders in the restoration of the king. Comp. ch. v. 3. Their backwardness is explained by the prominent part which Judah had taken in the rebellion (see on ch. xv. 10). even *to his house*] R.V. *to bring him* **to his house.** **12. my bone and my flesh** (R.V.). See note on ch. v. 1. **13. Art thou not my bone and my flesh** (R.V.), as in *v.* 12. Amasa was David's nephew, the son of his sister or step-sister Abigal. See ch. xvii. 25. Of course the message was to be privately conveyed to Amasa. It was a bold stroke of policy to promise the post of commander-in-chief to the general of the rebel army. By so doing, David designed at once to secure the allegiance of that army, and to punish Joab for killing Absalom in defiance of his command. But it was hardly prudent. Joab was certain not to submit to it tamely: Amasa's military skill was probably inferior, and his loyalty remained to be proved. *in the room of*] i.e. in the place of. **14.** *And he bowed* &c.] By this message David inclined the hearts of the men of Judah to restore him to the throne. **15.** Gilgal, between Jericho and the Jordan, was the rendezvous for the representatives of Judah—probably the elders—who were sent to escort the king back to Jerusalem.

16—44. David's return. Episodes on the journey.

16—23. Shimei sues for pardon. **16, 17.** Shimei and Ziba came with guilty consciences to curry favour by seeming to shew special zeal in bringing back the king. **17.** *they went over* &c.] R.V. **they went through Jordan in the**

over Jordan before the king. And there went over a ferry boat 18
to carry over the king's household, and to do what he thought
good. And Shimei the son of Gera fell down before the king,
as he was come over Jordan; and said unto the king, Let not 19
my lord impute iniquity unto me, neither do thou remember
that which thy servant did perversely the day that my lord the
king went out of Jerusalem, that the king should take *it* to his
heart. For thy servant doth know that I have sinned: there- 20
fore, behold, I am come the first *this* day of all the house of
Joseph to go down to meet my lord the king. But Abishai the 21
son of Zeruiah answered and said, Shall not Shimei be put to
death for this, because he cursed the LORD's anointed? And 22
David said, What have I to do with you, ye sons of Zeruiah,
that ye should *this* day be adversaries unto me? shall there
any man be put to death *this* day in Israel? for do not I know
that I *am this* day king over Israel? Therefore the king said 23
unto Shimei, Thou shalt not die. And the king sware unto him.

And Mephibosheth the son of Saul came down to meet the 24
king, and had neither dressed his feet, nor trimmed his beard,
nor washed his clothes, from the day the king departed until
the day he came *again* in peace. And it came to pass, when 25
he was come *to* Jerusalem to meet the king, that the king said

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presence of the king. Ziba and his retinue dashed into the river and crossed it, to shew their zeal by meeting the king on the eastern bank. **18.** *a ferry boat*] Or, *the convoy* (R.V. marg.). *as he was come*] R.V. **when he was come** &c. Shimei crossed along with Ziba to meet the king on the eastern bank. David's crossing is not mentioned till *v.* 39. Or, as R.V. marg., *when he* (i.e. David) *would go over Jordan.* **20.** *the house of Joseph*] The ten tribes of Israel as distinguished from Judah are thus named from Ephraim, the most powerful tribe among them (Gen. xlviii. 5). Comp. Ps. lxxviii. 67, 68; 1 Kings xi. 28; Amos v. 6. **21.** *Abishai*] True to his fierce, impetuous character. See ch. xvi. 9. *cursed the LORD's anointed*] Since the king was Jehovah's representative, to curse him was almost as heinous an offence as to curse Jehovah Himself. Ex. xxii. 28; Lev. xxiv. 15; 1 Kings xxi. 10. **22.** *adversaries*] Opposing my true interests. The Heb. word is *satan*. Comp. Matt. xvi. 23.

24—30. Mephibosheth's meeting with David. **24.** The neglect of his person, the unwashed feet, the untrimmed moustache, the soiled garments, were outward signs of extreme grief. Comp. ch. xii. 20; Ezek. xxiv. 17. **25.** *when he was come* to *Jerusalem*] If the reading is right, the meeting between David and Mephibosheth must have taken place in Jerusalem, and is introduced here out of chronological order, because of the mention of Ziba in *v.* 17. "Came down" in *v.* 24 must then be explained 'came down from his house in the highlands of Benjamin near Gibeah to Jerusalem,' not 'came down from Jerusalem to the Jordan.' The conclusion of *v.* 30 agrees with the supposition

unto him, Wherefore wentest not thou with me, Mephibosheth?
26 And he answered, My lord, O king, my servant deceived me:
for thy servant said, I will saddle me an ass, that I may ride
27 thereon, and go to the king; because thy servant *is* lame. And
he hath slandered thy servant unto my lord the king; but my
lord the king *is* as an angel of God: do therefore what *is* good
28 in thine eyes. For all *of* my father's house were but dead men
before my lord the king: yet didst thou set thy servant among
them that did eat at thine own table. What right therefore
29 have I yet to cry any more unto the king? And the king said
unto him, Why speakest thou any more of thy matters? I
30 have said, Thou and Ziba divide the land. And Mephibosheth
said unto the king, Yea, let him take all, forasmuch as my
lord the king is come *again* in peace unto his own house.
31 And Barzillai the Gileadite came down from Rogelim, and
went over Jordan with the king, to conduct him *over* Jordan.
32 Now Barzillai was a very aged man, *even* fourscore years old:
and he had provided the king of sustenance while he lay at
33 Mahanaim; for he *was* a very great man. And the king said
unto Barzillai, Come thou over with me, and I will feed thee
34 with me in Jerusalem. And Barzillai said unto the king,
How long have I to live, that I should go up with the king

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that Mephibosheth met David in Jerusalem. The rendering *when Jerusalem* (i.e. the inhabitants of Jerusalem) *was come*, (R.V. marg.) is forced. **26.** *said, I will saddle me an ass*] Meaning of course, *I will have my ass saddled*. Apparently Ziba, after receiving the order, saddled the asses, loaded them with provisions, and went to meet David with his fictitious story (ch. xvi. 1), leaving Mephibosheth in the lurch. *to the king*] Another reading is, **with the king** (R.V.) **27.** *as an angel* &c.] To discern the truth, and decide justly. Cp. ch. xiv. 17, 20. **28.** *were but dead men*] For David might have put them all to death. Possibly there is an allusion to the surrender of Saul's sons to the Gibeonites (ch. xxi. 6—9). *What right* &c.] R.V. **What right therefore have I yet that I should cry** &c. Since all David's favours to him were undeserved, he had no ground for demanding a restoration of his property as a right. **29.** *I have said*] R.V. **I say.** David's decision is usually supposed to be a compromise between the two claimants, either because David suspected Mephibosheth's story, or because he was unwilling to alienate Ziba. **30.** *Yea, let him take all*] Mephibosheth's affection was for his master, not for his property. There is no reason for supposing that his version of the story was false and Ziba's true.

31—40. Barzillai's farewell to David. **31.** *Barzillai*] See ch. xvii. 27. **32.** *provided...of sustenance*] An obsolete use of the preposition *of* where we now employ *with*. *lay*] i.e. abode. Cp. Josh. ii. 1, *marg.* **33.** *I will feed thee*] R.V. **I will sustain thee**; the same word as in *v.* 32,

unto Jerusalem? I *am this* day fourscore years old: *and* can 35
I discern between good and evil? can thy servant taste what I
eat or what I drink? can I hear any more the voice of singing
men and singing *women?* wherefore then should thy servant be
yet a burden unto my lord the king? Thy servant will go a 36
little *way* over Jordan with the king: and why should the king
recompense *it* me *with* such a reward? Let thy servant, I pray 37
thee, turn back again, that I may die in mine own city, *and be*
buried by the grave of my father and of my mother. But
behold thy servant Chimham; let him go over with my lord
the king; and do to him what shall seem good unto thee. And 38
the king answered, Chimham shall go over with me, and I will
do to him *that* which shall seem good unto thee: and whatsoever
thou shalt require of me, *that* will I do for thee. And all the 39
people went over Jordan. And when the king was come over,
the king kissed Barzillai, and blessed him; and he returned
unto his own place. Then the king went on to Gilgal, and 40
Chimham went on with him: and all the people of Judah con-
ducted the king, and also half the people of Israel.

And behold, all the men of Israel came to the king, and said 41
unto the king, Why have our brethren the men of Judah stolen
thee away, and have brought the king, and his household, and
all David's men with him, over Jordan? And all the men of 42
Judah answered the men of Israel, Because the king *is* near of
kin to us: wherefore then be ye angry for this matter? have we
eaten at all of the king's *cost?* or hath he given us *any* gift?
And the men of Israel answered the men of Judah, and said, 43

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and Gen. xlv. 11 (A.V. *nourish*). **35.** *singing* men &c.] Musicians were a part of royal state (Eccl. ii. 8): banquets were commonly enlivened by music. See Is. v. 11, 12, xxiv. 8, 9; Am. vi. 4—6. **36.** R.V. **Thy servant would but just go over Jordan.** **37.** The ancient affection for the family grave is very remarkable. See Jud. viii. 32; 2 Sam. ii. 32, xvii. 23, xxi. 14; 1 Kings xiii. 22. *Chimham*] Barzillai's son, who with his brothers was specially commended to Solomon's care (1 Kings ii. 7).

39. *all the people*] David's followers.

41—43. Dispute between the men of Judah and the men of Israel. **41.** The northern tribes had been foremost in proposing the restoration (*vv.* 9, 10), but they had not been invited to the gathering at Gilgal. Consequently only a few of them, probably those from the immediate neighbourhood, were there. But while the king was still at Gilgal, the rest of the Israelite representatives arrived, and complained to David that they had been forestalled by Judah, and cheated of the privilege of escorting him back. Comp. the instances of Ephraimite jealousy in Jud. viii. 1, xii. 1. **42.** *have we eaten* &c.] They defend themselves by alleging the purity of their motives. **43.** The northern tribes claim a share of the king in proportion to their number, and

We have ten parts in the king, and we have also more *right* in David than ye: why then did ye despise us, that our advice should not be first had in bringing back our king? And the words of the men of Judah were fiercer than the words of the men of Israel.

20 And there happened to be there a man of Belial, whose name *was* Sheba, the son of Bichri, a Benjamite: and he blew a trumpet, and said, We have no part in David, neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse: every man to his tents, O
2 Israel. So every man of Israel went up from after David, *and* followed Sheba the son of Bichri: but the men of Judah clave unto their king, from Jordan even to Jerusalem.

3 And David came to his house *at* Jerusalem; and the king took the ten women *his* concubines, whom he had left to keep the house, and put them *in* ward, and fed them, but went not in unto them. So they were shut up unto the day of their death, living in widowhood.

4 Then said the king to Amasa, Assemble me the men of Judah
5 *within* three days, and be thou here present. So Amasa went to assemble *the men of* Judah: but he tarried longer than the set
6 time which he had appointed him. And David said to Abishai, Now shall Sheba the son of Bichri do us more harm than *did*

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maintain this to be their right even in the case of David, whom the men of Judah might assert to belong specially to them as being their kinsman. Ephraim and Manasseh are counted as one in the reckoning of Israel as *ten* tribes. Comp. 1 Kings xi. 31, 35.

that our advice &c.] Or, as R.V. marg., *and were not we the first to speak of bringing back our king?* a reference to the movement described in *vv.* 9, 10.

XX. Sheba's Rebellion.

1—3. Fresh outbreak of rebellion, headed by Sheba. David's return to Jerusalem. **1.** *there*] At Gilgal. The dispute offered an immediate opening to a bold and ambitious leader, who hoped to restore the sovereignty to the tribe of Benjamin.

a man of Belial] **A worthless** or **wicked** man. See note on ch. xvi. 7. *part*] R.V. **portion,** as in 1 Kings xii. 16.

the son of Jesse] There is a touch of contempt in this name for David. Cp. 1 Sam. xx. 27, 30, 31, xxii. 7, 8, 9, 13, xxv. 10.

every man to his tents] Nominally a call to disperse and return to their homes (1 Sam. xiii. 2; 2 Sam. xviii. 17); really an invitation to join him in rebellion. Cp. 1 Kings xii. 16. **2.** *went up*] From Gilgal in the valley of the Jordan to the hill country of Ephraim.

4—13. The Pursuit of Sheba. Amasa murdered by Joab.

4. The commission was given to Amasa in fulfilment of the promise privately made to him (ch. xix. 13). *Assemble me* &c.] "The men of Judah" in *v.* 2 were only a small body of representatives. **6.** Determined at any rate to supersede Joab,

Absalom: take thou thy lord's servants, and pursue after him, lest he get him fenced cities, and escape us. And there went out 7
after him Joab's men, and the Cherethites, and the Pelethites, and all the mighty *men:* and they went out of Jerusalem, to pursue after Sheba the son of Bichri. When they *were* at the 8
great stone which *is* in Gibeon, Amasa went before them. And Joab's garment that he had put on *was* girded unto him, and upon it a girdle with a sword fastened upon his loins in the sheath thereof; and as he went forth it fell out. And Joab 9
said to Amasa, *Art* thou in health, my brother? And Joab took Amasa by the beard with the right hand to kiss him. But Amasa took no heed to the sword that *was* in Joab's hand: 10
so he smote him therewith in the fifth *rib,* and shed out his bowels to the ground, and strake him not again; and he died. So Joab and Abishai his brother pursued after Sheba the son of Bichri. And one of Joab's men stood by him, and said, He 11
that favoureth Joab, and he that *is* for David, *let him go* after Joab. And Amasa wallowed in blood in the midst of the high- 12
way. And when the man saw that all the people stood still,

David now gave his orders to Abishai. For the moment Joab seemed to acquiesce, and marched out under his brother's command (*v.* 7), intending to wait his opportunity. This speedily presented itself: without scruple he murdered his rival, and then by Abishai's consent, resumed his old position as commander-in-chief (*vv.* 10, 11). *thy lord's servants*] The troops mentioned in *v.* 7, which formed a small standing army. **8.** *went before them*] R.V. **came to meet them,** apparently as he was returning to Jerusalem, after raising an army in Benjamin as well as in Judah. **And Joab was girded with his apparel of war that he had put on, and thereon was a girdle** &c. (R.V.) In the girdle which Joab wore over his military dress was stuck a dagger. As he met Amasa he contrived to let this fall out of its sheath on the ground. He picked it up in his left hand, and the movement being apparently purely accidental, excited no alarm in Amasa's mind. **9.** Art *thou in health*] R.V. **Is it well with thee.** It is said to be still customary among the Arabs and Turks to lay hold of a person's beard in giving him the kiss of welcome. **10.** *in the fifth* rib] **in the belly.** See on ch. ii. 23. *strake*] An archaism for *struck.* Comp. ch. xii. 15; Acts xxvii. 17. *So Joab*] R.V. **And Joab** &c. Covered with the stains of murder (1 Kings ii. 5), Joab started in pursuit of Sheba, leaving his victim where he fell. **11. And there stood by him one of Joab's young men** (R.V.); perhaps one of his armour-bearers (ch. xviii. 15), who remained by the corpse to invite Amasa's followers to join Joab. Time was too precious for Joab himself to lose a moment. *He that favoureth Joab* &c.] He appeals to their personal attachment to himself as general, and to their loyalty to David. **12.** *all the people*] Here and in *v.* 13, the troops which Amasa had been mustering.

he removed Amasa out of the highway *into* the field, and cast a cloth upon him, when he saw that every one that came by
13 him stood still. When he was removed out of the highway, all the people went on after Joab, to pursue after Sheba the son of Bichri.
14 And he went through all the tribes of Israel unto Abel, and *to* Beth-maachah, and all the Berites: and they were gathered
15 together, and went also after him. And they came and besieged him in Abel of Beth-maachah, and they cast up a bank against the city, and it stood in the trench: and all the people
16 that *were* with Joab battered the wall, to throw *it* down. Then cried a wise woman out of the city, Hear, hear; say, I pray you, unto Joab, Come near hither, that I may speak with thee.
17 And when he was come near unto her, the woman said, *Art* thou Joab? And he answered, I *am he*. Then she said unto him, Hear the words of thine handmaid. And he answered,
18 I do hear. Then she spake, saying, They were wont to speak in old time, saying, They shall surely ask *counsel* at Abel: and
19 so they ended *the matter*. I *am one of them that are* peaceable *and* faithful in Israel: thou seekest to destroy a city and a mother in Israel: why wilt thou swallow up the inheritance of
20 the LORD? And Joab answered and said, Far be it, far be it

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14—22. Sheba besieged in Abel-Beth-Maachah. **14.** Joab marched rapidly northward, gathering forces as he went. *unto Abel* &c.] Abel was apparently near Beth-Maachah, and was commonly called Abel-beth-Maachah to distinguish it from other places named Abel (=*meadow*). See 1 Kings xv. 20; 2 Kings xv. 29. It was situated about 12 miles N. of the Waters of Merom. *the Berites*] Apparently a district or people in northern Palestine otherwise unknown to us. **15.** *a bank*] R.V. **a mount.** The besiegers erected a mound of earth against the city wall to enable them to batter the upper and weaker part of it. This stood **against the rampart** (R.V.) or outwork of the city: a term which includes the low outer wall and the space between it and the main wall. For mention of siege mounds see 2 Kings xix. 32; Is. xxix. 3; Jer. vi. 6, xxxii. 24, xxxiii. 4; Ez. iv. 2, xvii. 17, xxi. 22, xxvi. 8; Dan. xi. 15. *battered*] Or, *undermined* (R.V. marg.). **16.** *a wise woman*] Comp. ch. xiv. 2. **18, 19.** The city had been proverbial for its wisdom from ancient times; men consulted it as an oracle for the settlement of their disputes; a city of such reputation, loyal moreover and peaceable, ought not, she implies, to be thus attacked. Possibly she means further to hint, that if Joab had consulted the inhabitants, and had negotiated for the surrender of Sheba, the siege might have been avoided. **19.** R.V. **I am of them that are peaceable and faithful in Israel.** The woman speaks in the name of the city. *to destroy* &c.] Lit. **to slay:** the personification of the city is kept up. On "mother" as applied to a city (*metropolis*) see note on ch. viii. 1. *the inheritance of the* LORD] Cp. ch. x. 12, xiv. 16; 1 Sam. xxvi. 19.

from me, that I should swallow up or destroy. The matter *is* 21
not so: but a man of mount Ephraim, Sheba the son of Bichri
by name, hath lift up his hand against the king, *even* against
David: deliver him only, and I will depart from the city. And
the woman said unto Joab, Behold, his head *shall be* thrown to
thee over the wall. Then the woman went unto all the people 22
in her wisdom. And they cut off the head of Sheba the son of
Bichri, and cast *it* out to Joab. And he blew a trumpet, and
they retired from the city, every man to his tent. And Joab
returned *to* Jerusalem unto the king.

Now Joab *was* over all the host of Israel: and Benaiah the 23
son of Jehoiada *was* over the Cherethites and over the Pele-
thites: and Adoram *was* over the tribute: and Jehoshaphat 24
the son of Ahilud *was* recorder: and Sheva *was* scribe: and 25
Zadok and Abiathar *were* the priests: and Ira also the Jairite 26
was a chief ruler about David.

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21. *mount Ephraim*] The name **the hill country of Ephraim** (R.V.), applied to the central mountainous district of Palestine, was extended southwards so as to include part of the territory of Benjamin. See note on 1 Sam. i. 1. *lift*] An archaic form for *lifted*. **22.** *they retired*] R.V. **they were dispersed,** to their several homes.

23—26. The Officers of David's court. Comp. ch. viii. 16—18. Some differences between the lists are explained by their belonging to different periods. **23.** *Joab*] Retaining his post in spite of David's resolution to depose him. *Cherethites*] Another reading is, *Carites*, a word found in 2 Kings xi. 4, 19 (R.V.), and like *Cherethites* variously explained to mean *executioners*, the body-guard acting in that capacity, or *Carians*, foreign mercenaries employed as a body-guard. **24.** *Adoram*] Perhaps the same as *Adoniram* (1 Kings iv. 6, v. 14), who held the office in Solomon's reign, and *Adoram*, who held it at the beginning of Rehoboam's reign (1 Kings xii. 18), but possibly three persons of the same family, who succeeded one another in the office, are meant.

over the tribute] Better, as R.V. marg., **over the levy** (1 Kings iv. 6, R.V., v. 14); superintendent of the forced levies employed in public works. Comp. 1 Kings xii. 4. The appearance of this new officer in the closing years of David's reign is significant of the change which had taken place in the character of his rule.

26. *a chief ruler* &c.] R.V. **priest unto David:** marg., *a chief minister*. See on ch. viii. 18.

XXI. **1—11.** A three years' Famine for Saul's massacre of the Gibeonites. The Execution of Saul's sons. (1) It may seem strange that the nation was punished for the sin of its ruler committed many years before. But, apart from the fact that we do not know to what extent the nation made the crime their own by approving it, we must remember that the king was the representative of the people. If the sins of an individual were regarded as implicating the whole community, until detected and repudiated (see e.g. Deut.

21 Then there was a famine in the days of David three years,
year after year; and David inquired of the LORD. And the
LORD answered, *It is* for Saul, and for *his* bloody house, because
2 he slew the Gibeonites. And the king called the Gibeonites,
and said unto them; (now the Gibeonites *were* not of the
children of Israel, but of the remnant of the Amorites; and the
children of Israel had sworn unto them: and Saul sought to
slay them in his zeal to the children of Israel and Judah.)
3 Wherefore David said unto the Gibeonites, What shall I do for
you? and wherewith shall I make the atonement, that ye may
4 bless the inheritance of the LORD? And the Gibeonites said
unto him, We will have no silver nor gold of Saul, nor of his

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xxi. 1—9; Josh. vii. 1 ff.), much more must the sins of the national representative involve the whole nation in their consequences. The fact that the punishment did not come until years after the sin was committed is "a recognition of the continuance of a nation's life, of its obligations and its sins from age to age. All national morality, nay, the meaning and possibility of history, depends upon this truth." *Maurice.* (2) Saul's sons, who were not charged with being personally accessory to their father's crime, were put to death to expiate it. In those early ages the family was regarded as an unit, and the sins of the head of the family were regarded as involving all its members in their consequences. Consequently, as seen by the people, the execution of Saul's sons was a *judicial* act of retribution. But why did God sanction it? As a *didactic* act, designed to teach the guilt of sin. God has an absolute power of life and death over His creatures, and may at any time take away the life which He has given, when He sees that it is necessary in order to teach some great lesson; in this case, to shew that solemn oaths might not be violated with impunity. **1. And there was a famine** (R.V.). There is no adverb of time marking chronological connexion with the foregoing narrative. The famine must have occurred after David became acquainted with Mephibosheth (*v.* 7); and in all probability before Absalom's rebellion; but its date cannot be fixed more exactly. In Palestine a famine was the almost certain consequence of a failure of the winter rains. See 1 Kings xviii. 2; Joel i. 8—20, for famine as the result of drought; and comp. Gen. xii. 10, xxvi. 1, xlii. 5; Ruth i. 1; 2 Kings viii. 1, 2. *inquired* &c.] R.V. **sought the face of the LORD.** David sought to ascertain the cause of this judgment; for famine was one of the "four sore judgments" of God (Ezek. xiv. 21; cp. 1 Kings viii. 35—37).

his *bloody house*] i.e. blood-guilty. Murder "defiled the land," and involved the nation in punishment. See Num. xxxv. 33, 34; Deut. xxi. 7—9. **2.** *Amorites* (=highlanders) is here and elsewhere used as a general designation for the ancient inhabitants of Palestine. The Gibeonites belonged to the tribe of the Hivites. *had sworn*] See Josh. ix. 3 ff. *in his zeal*] Probably in a fit of zeal to carry out the Law by cleansing the land from the remnant of the heathen (Ex. xxxiv. 11—16; Deut. vii. 2) as he cleansed it from the soothsayers (1 Sam. xxviii. 3). **4.** R.V. **It is no**

house; neither for us *shalt thou* kill any man in Israel. And
he said, What you shall say, *that* will I do for you. And they 5
answered the king, The man that consumed us, and that de-
vised against us *that* we should be destroyed from remaining
in any of the coasts of Israel, let seven men of his sons be 6
delivered unto us, and we will hang them up unto the LORD in
Gibeah of Saul, whom the LORD did choose. And the king
said, I will give *them*. But the king spared Mephibosheth, the 7
son of Jonathan the son of Saul, because of the LORD'S oath
that *was* between them, between David and Jonathan the son
of Saul. But the king took the two sons of Rizpah the daugh- 8
ter of Aiah, whom she bare unto Saul, Armoni and Mephibo-
sheth; and the five sons of Michal the daughter of Saul, whom
she brought up for Adriel the son of Barzillai the Meholathite:
and he delivered them into the hands of the Gibeonites, and 9
they hanged them in the hill before the LORD: and they fell
all seven together, and were put to death in the days of harvest,
in the first *days*, in the beginning of barley harvest. And 10

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matter of silver or gold between us and Saul, or his house; neither is it for us to put any man to death in Israel. No money compensation could expiate Saul's offence (Num. xxxv. 31, 32), and the Gibeonites themselves had no power to exact blood-revenge. The A.V., *neither for us* &c., retained in R.V. marg., would mean that their cry for vengeance was against the house of Saul, and not against the nation at large.

5. *derised*] This, and not the marginal alternative *cut us off*, is the right rendering. *coasts*] R.V. **borders.** *Coast* originally meant any border or frontier-line, not the sea-line only; and then the territory enclosed by the border. **6.** *seven men*] A sacred number, for their execution was to be a solemn religious act of expiation. They were to be put to death, and their bodies exposed, as a public exhibition of the punishment inflicted. The practice corresponds to that of hanging a criminal's body in chains on the scene of his crime, which was once common in England. The home of Saul was to be the scene of the punishment. *unto the LORD*] For the punishment was demanded by Divine justice. Comp. Num. xxv. 4. *whom the LORD did choose*] The exact title, **the chosen of the LORD** (R.V.), is nowhere else given to Saul, but is implied by 1 Sam. x. 24. There is a bitter irony in its use by his enemies, as though his Divine election aggravated his guilt.

7. *the LORD'S oath*] See 1 Sam. xviii. 3, xx. 12—17, 42, xxiii. 18.

8. *the five sons of Michal...whom she brought up for Adriel*] The Heb. text can only mean **whom she bare to Adriel** (R.V.). But it was *Merab*, not Michal, who was married to Adriel (1 Sam. xviii. 19). Apparently we must read **Merab** for *Michal* here. *the Meholathite*] Of *Abel-Meholah*, a town in the Jordan valley near Beth-shan, famous as the birth-place of Elisha (1 Kings xix. 16).

9. *in the first* days] Barley harvest preceded wheat harvest, and began about the middle or end of April. Comp. Ex. ix. 31, 32;

Rizpah the daughter of Aiah took sackcloth, and spread it for her upon the rock, from the beginning of harvest until water dropped upon them out of heaven, and suffered neither the birds of the air to rest on them by day, nor the beasts of the field by night.

11 And it was told David what Rizpah the daughter of Aiah, the
12 concubine of Saul, had done. And David went and took the bones of Saul and the bones of Jonathan his son from the men of Jabesh-gilead, which had stolen them from the street of Beth-shan, where the Philistines had hanged them, when the
13 Philistines had slain Saul in Gilboa: and he brought up from thence the bones of Saul and the bones of Jonathan his son;
14 and they gathered the bones of them that were hanged. And the bones of Saul and Jonathan his son buried they in the country of Benjamin in Zelah, in the sepulchre of Kish his father: and they performed all that the king commanded. And after that God was intreated for the land.

15 Moreover the Philistines had yet war again with Israel; and David went down, and his servants with him, and fought
16 against the Philistines: and David waxed faint. And Ishbi-benob, which *was* of the sons of the giant, the weight of whose

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Ruth i. 22, ii. 23. **10.** *spread it*] As a rough tent to shelter her while she watched the corpses. *dropped upon them*] **was poured upon them** (R.V.): that is, until heavy rains shewed that the crime was expiated and the judgment of drought withdrawn. If the rain did not fall until the usual season, Rizpah must have kept her devoted watch for six months, from April to October.

11—14. Burial of the bones of Saul and his sons. **12.** *David went*] Touched by Rizpah's devotion, and wishing to shew that he had no personal enmity to the house of Saul. *the men of Jabesh-gilead*] See 1 Sam. xxxi. 11—13; 2 Sam. ii. 4. *the street*] Or, *broad place* (R.V. marg.). The bodies were hung on the wall (1 Sam. xxxi. 10) in the square or open place just inside the gate, the public meeting-place of all the citizens. Comp. 2 Chr. xxxii. 6; Neh. viii. 1, 3, 16. *Beth-shan*] Now *Beisân*, four miles west of the Jordan in the *Wâdy Jâlûd*. See note on 1 Sam. xxxi. 10. **14. Zela** (R.V.) is mentioned among the towns of Benjamin in Josh. xviii. 28, but has not been identified. *God was intreated*] Accepted the intreaty or intercession thus made on behalf of the land. Comp. ch. xxiv. 25; Gen. xxv. 21; 2 Chr. xxxiii. 13.

15—22 [*vv.* 18—22=1 Chr. xx. 4—8]. Heroic exploits in the Philistine wars. This section is quite unconnected with the preceding narrative. **15.** *again* may refer to earlier wars, the account of which preceded this narrative in the document from which it was taken. *went down*] From the high lands of Judah to the low country of Philistia—the *Shephêlah* or maritime plain.

16. *Ishbi-benob*] Perhaps="dweller on a height," a name given him because he lived in some inaccessible castle. *the giant*] Heb. *Râphâh*, a quasi proper-name for the father of the four giants

spear *weighed* three hundred *shekels* of brass *in* weight, he being girded *with* a new *sword*, thought to have slain David. But Abishai the son of Zeruiah succoured him, and smote the 17
Philistine, and killed him. Then the men of David sware unto him, saying, Thou shalt go no more out with us to battle, that thou quench not the light of Israel. And it came to pass 18
after this, that there was again a battle with the Philistines at Gob: then Sibbechai the Hushathite slew Saph, which *was* of the sons of the giant. And there was again a battle in Gob 19
with the Philistines, where Elhanan the son of Jaare-oregim, a Beth-lehemite, slew *the brother of* Goliath the Gittite, the staff of whose spear *was* like a weaver's beam. And there was 20
yet a battle in Gath, where was a man of *great* stature, that had on every hand six fingers, and on every foot six toes, four and twenty *in* number; and he also was born to the giant. And 21
when he defied Israel, Jonathan the son of Shimea the brother of David slew him. These four were born to the giant in Gath, 22
and fell by the hand of David, and by the hand of his servants.

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here mentioned, or for the founder of the tribe of *Rephaim*.

three hundred shekels] About nine pounds: half the weight of Goliath's spear head. *brass*] See note on ch. viii. 8.

a new sword] Or, *new* armour (R.V. marg.). *that thou quench not the light of Israel*] R.V. **the lamp.** A natural metaphor for changing the light of prosperity into the darkness of calamity; and in particular David's sovereignty was the lamp which God's favour had lighted for the well-being of His people. **18.** *Gob*] Mentioned only here and in *v.* 19. The Sept. reads *Gath*, 1 Chr. xx. 4 has *Gezer*. *Gob* is either a corruption of the text, or some unknown place, perhaps near Gezer, for which see note on ch. v. 25.

Sibbechai] One of David's heroes (1 Chr. xi. 29), general of the eighth division of the army (1 Chr. xxvii. 11). See note on ch. xxiii. 27. *Saph*] In Chron. *Sippai*. **19.** *where Elhanan* &c.] R.V. **and Elhanan the son of Jaare-oregim the Beth-lehemite slew Goliath the Gittite.** The words *the brother of* are conjecturally inserted in the A.V. from 1 Chr. xx. 5, which reads, *and Elhanan the son of Jair slew Lahmi the brother of Goliath the Gittite*. The text here is probably corrupt; though there would be no difficulty in supposing that another giant, beside the one slain by David, bore the name of Goliath. Another Elhanan of Beth-lehem is mentioned in ch. xxiii. 24. *the staff* &c.] Comp. 1 Sam. xvii. 7; 1 Chr. xi. 23. The **shaft** of his spear, short, but extraordinarily stout and heavy, was popularly compared to the "beam" to which the web is fastened in a loom.

21. *defied Israel*] Comp. 1 Sam. xvii. 10, 25, 26. *Jonathan*] David's nephew, brother of the astute Jonadab (ch. xiii. 3).

Shimea] So in 1 Chr. ii. 13, xx. 7: In 1 Sam. xvi. 9, Shammah. R.V. here **Shimei.** **22.** *were born* &c.] Were descendants of *Rapha*, or, *the giant:* not necessarily all four sons of one man. See note on *v.* 16.

22 And David spake unto the LORD the words of this song in
the day *that* the LORD had delivered him out of the hand of all
2 his enemies, and out of the hand of Saul: and he said,
The LORD *is* my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer;
3 The God of my rock; in him will I trust:
He is my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my high
tower, and my refuge,
My saviour; thou savest me from violence.
4 I will call on the LORD, who is *worthy* to be praised:
So shall I be saved from mine enemies.

XXII. [=Ps. xviii.]. David's thanksgiving for deliverance from his enemies. This Psalm was written, as the title indicates, when David's triumphs over his enemies at home and abroad were still recent. Its composition may be assigned to the period of peace described in ch. vii. 1; but must be placed after Nathan's visit, as *v.* 51 seems to refer to the promise made through him. The joyous tone of the Psalm, and its bold expressions of conscious integrity, also point to the earlier years of David's reign rather than the later, overclouded as these were by the fatal consequences of his sin. The differences between the text here and that in the Psalter appear to be due partly to errors of transcription, partly to changes made by scribes who from time to time revised the text.

1. The Title. Comp. the inscriptions which introduce Moses' songs in the historical narrative (Ex. xv. 1; Deut. xxxi. 30).

in the day that] i.e. at the time when. *Saul*] Specially mentioned as the bitterest of his enemies, and because the deliverance from his power raised David to the throne of Israel.

2—4. Introductory invocation. **2.** The opening address to God, found in Ps. xviii, "I love thee, O LORD my strength," is wanting here. **2, 3.** The imagery, by which David describes all that Jehovah had been to him as a Deliverer from his enemies, is derived from the experiences of his warlike life, and particularly of his flight from Saul. The **cliff** (1 Sam. xxiii. 25, 28) where he had escaped from Saul, the **strong-hold** in the wilderness of Judah or the fastnesses of En-gedi (1 Sam. xxiii. 14, 19, 29), "the rocks of the wild goats" (1 Sam. xxiv. 2), were all emblems of Him who had been throughout his true Refuge and Deliverer. **3.** *The God of my rock*] = my strong God: in the Ps., "my God, my Rock." The title Rock describes the strength, faithfulness, and unchangeableness of God. See Deut. xxxii. 4, 37; 1 Sam. ii. 2; Ps. xxviii. 1, &c.

in him will I trust] Quoted in Heb. ii. 13; cp. Ps. xciv. 22.

my shield] Comp. Gen. xv. 1; Deut. xxxiii. 29. *the horn* &c.] The Power which saves and delivers me. The figure of the horn, as a symbol of victorious strength, is derived from horned animals. Comp. Deut. xxxiii. 17; Lk. i. 69. The words *and my refuge...violence* are omitted in Ps. xviii.

5—7. The Psalmist's perils. His cry for help. The perils to which he had been exposed are described as waves and floods which

When the waves of death compassed me, 5
The floods of ungodly men made me afraid;
The sorrows of hell compassed me about; 6
The snares of death prevented me:
In my distress I called upon the LORD, 7
And cried to my God:
And he did hear my voice out of his temple,
And my cry *did enter* into his ears.
Then the earth shook and trembled; 8
The foundations of heaven moved
And shook, because he was wroth.
There went up a smoke out of his nostrils, 9
And fire out of his mouth devoured:
Coals were kindled by it.
He bowed the heavens also, and came down; 10
And darkness *was* under his feet.

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threatened to engulf him: Sheol and death are represented as laying wait for his life like hunters with nets and snares. **5.** *ungodly men*] R.V. **ungodliness.** Heb. *Belial.* See note on ch. xvi. 7.

6. R.V. **The cords of Sheol were round about me: the snares of death came upon me.** *Sheôl* is the mysterious unseen world. See note on 1 Sam. ii. 6. *prevented*] See note on *v.* 19. **7.** *his temple*] The palace temple of heaven, where He sits enthroned. Comp. Ps. xi. 4.

8—16. The manifestation of Jehovah for the discomfiture of David's enemies. Earthquake and storm are regarded as the visible manifestations of Divine Power: and therefore God's interposition for the deliverance of His servant is described as accompanied by terrible phenomena in nature. See Ex. xix. 16—18; and comp. Ps. lxviii. 8, lxxvii. 16—18; Jud. v. 4, 5. The earthquake (*v.* 8); the distant lightnings (*v.* 9); the gathering darkness of the storm (*vv.* 10—12); the final outburst of its fury (*vv.* 13—16), are pictured in regular succession. **8.** *the foundations of heaven*] The mountains on which the vault of heaven seems to rest: comp. "the pillars of heaven" (Job xxvi. 11): or perhaps the universe is regarded as a vast building. Comp. 1 Sam. ii. 8. **9.** The Psalmist's aim is vividly to express the manifestation of the wrath of God, and he does so in figures which are intended to remain as purely mental conceptions, not to be realised as though God appeared in any visible shape. *a smoke*] The outward sign of the pent-up fires of wrath. So anger is said *to smoke* (Ps. lxxiv. 1, lxxx. 4 marg.). *fire*] The emblem of the consuming wrath of God. See Deut. xxxii. 22; Ps. xcvii. 3; Heb. xii. 29. *coals*] The fiery messengers of vengeance. Comp. Ps. cxl. 10.

10. The dark canopy of storm cloud, which is the pavement under His feet (Nah. i. 3), lowers as He descends to judgment. God is said to *come down* when He manifests His power in the world (Gen. xi. 7, xviii. 21; Is. lxiv. 1). *Darkness* symbolizes the mystery and terror of His Advent (Ex. xix. 16, xx. 21; 1 Kings

11 And he rode upon a cherub, and did fly:
And he was seen upon the wings of the wind.
12 And he made darkness pavilions round about him,
Dark waters, *and* thick clouds of the skies.
13 Through the brightness before him
Were coals of fire kindled.
14 The LORD thundered from heaven,
And the most High uttered his voice.
15 And he sent out arrows, and scattered them;
Lightning, and discomfited them.
16 And the channels of the sea appeared,
The foundations of the world were discovered,
At the rebuking of the LORD,
At the blast of the breath of his nostrils.
17 He sent from above, he took me;
He drew me out of many waters;

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viii. 12; Ps. xcvii. 2). **11.** As the Shechinah, or mystic Presence of God in the cloud of glory, rested over the Cherubim which were upon the "Mercy-seat" or covering of the Ark (ch. vi. 2), so God is represented "riding upon a Cherub," as the living throne on which He traverses space. *was seen*] In Ps. xviii. 10, *flew swiftly*, probably the original reading. For "the wings of the wind" comp. Ps. civ. 3. **12.** The darkness of the clouds is the tent in which God shrouds His Majesty. *dark waters*] So in Ps. xviii. 11 (*darkness of waters*); but the word here means **gathering of waters** (R.V.). **13. At the brightness** &c. (R.V.). The lightning flashes which now burst through the cloud are as it were rays of the light in which He dwells. **14.** *the most High*] God as the Supreme Ruler of the Universe. Comp. Gen. xiv. 18—22; Deut. xxxii. 8. *his voice*] Thunder is the voice of God. See Job xxxvii. 2—5. **15.** *scattered them*] The enemies whose destruction was the object of this Divine interposition (*v.* 4). *discomfited them*] A word denoting *the confusion of a sudden panic*, and used specially of *supernatural* defeat. Cp. Ex. xiv. 24 (R.V.); Josh. x. 10; Jud. iv. 15; 1 Sam. vii. 10.

16. All nature is pictured as convulsed to its lowest depths; the sea dried up, and the hidden bases of the world laid bare, owning their Lord and Master, as of old at the passage of the Red Sea, when "He rebuked the Red Sea, and it was dried up." See Ex. xv. 8; Ps. civ. 7, cvi. 9; Nah. i. 4. Comp. too Mt. viii. 26.

were discovered] i.e. as R.V. **were laid bare;** the old meaning of the word. *at the blast* &c.] Comp. *v.* 9.

17—21. Jehovah's deliverance of His servant for his faithfulness. **17.** *from above*] R.V. **from on high.** He stretched out His hand and caught hold of the sinking man, and drew him out of the floods of calamity which were engulfing him. Cp. *v.* 5; Ps. cxliv. 7.

drew me] A word found elsewhere only in Ex. ii. 10, and suggesting a parallel, as though David would say, 'He drew me out of the great waters of distress, as He drew Moses out of the waters of

He delivered me from my strong enemy, 18
And from them that hated me: for they were too strong for me.
They prevented me in the day of my calamity: 19
But the LORD was my stay.
He brought me forth also into a large place: 20
He delivered me, because he delighted in me.
The LORD rewarded me according to my righteousness: 21
According to the cleanness of my hands hath he recompensed me.
For I have kept the ways of the LORD, 22
And have not wickedly departed from my God.
For all his judgments *were* before me: 23
And *as for* his statutes, I did not depart from them.
I was also upright before him, 24
And have kept myself from mine iniquity.
Therefore the LORD hath recompensed me according to my 25
righteousness;
According to my cleanness in his eye sight.

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the Nile, to be the deliverer of His people.' **19.** *They prevented me*] R.V. **they came upon me,** the same word as in *v.* 6, meaning *to meet with hostile intention. Prevent* is used in a sense which illustrates the transition from the original meaning 'to go before' to the modern meaning 'to hinder.' *my stay*] The staff on which he leaned for support. Cp. Ps. xxiii. 4. **20.** *a large place*] The opposite of the *straits* of peril. Cp. *v.* 37; Ps. xxxi. 8. *because he delighted in me*] This was the ground of God's deliverance, and it now becomes the leading thought of the Psalm. Comp. ch. xv. 26; Ps. xxii. 8; and also Matt. iii. 17.

21. This is no vain-glorious boasting, but a testimony to the faithfulness of Jehovah to guard and reward His faithful servants. David does not lay claim to a perfect righteousness, but to sincerity and single-heartedness in his devotion to God. Comp. his own testimony (1 Sam. xxvi. 23), God's testimony (1 Kings xiv. 8), and the testimony of history (1 Kings xi. 4, xv. 5), to his integrity. *the cleanness of my hands*] = the purity of my actions. Cp. Ps. xxiv. 4.

22—25. The Integrity of David's life and its Reward. He goes on to substantiate the assertion of the preceding verse.

23. God's commandments were continually present to his mind as the rule of life. Cp. Deut. vi. 6—9; Ps. cxix. 30, 102. *and as for his statutes* &c.] In Ps. xviii. 22, "And his statutes did I not put away from me," in order to sin with less compunction.

24. *upright*] R.V. **perfect toward him.** It expresses the sincerity of undivided devotion. As a sacrificial term it signifies *without blemish*. Comp. Eph. i. 4; Col. i. 22, &c. *have kept myself* &c.] I have watched over myself that I might not transgress. **25.** The assertion of *v.* 21 is repeated as the conclusion to be drawn from the review of his conduct in *vv.* 22—24, and is

26 With the merciful thou wilt shew thyself merciful,
And with the upright man thou wilt shew thyself upright.
27 With the pure thou wilt shew thyself pure;
And with the froward thou wilt shew thyself unsavoury.
28 And the afflicted people thou wilt save:
But thine eyes *are* upon the haughty, *that* thou mayest bring
them down.
29 For thou *art* my lamp, O LORD:
And the LORD will lighten my darkness.
30 For by thee I have run *through* a troop:
By my God have I leaped over a wall.
31 *As for* God, his way *is* perfect;
The word of the LORD *is* tried:

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confirmed in the following verses by a consideration of the general laws of God's moral government.

26—28. The law of God's dealings with men. God's attitude towards men is regulated by men's attitude towards God (comp. 1 Sam. ii. 30, xv. 23). **26.** *the merciful*] Comp. Matt. v. 7. *upright*] R.V. **perfect.** **27.** *with the pure* &c.] Comp. 1 John iii. 3; Matt. v. 8; Ps. lxxiii. 1. *and with the froward* &c.] R.V. **and with the perverse thou wilt shew thyself froward;** with marg. note, 'So Ps. xviii. 26. The text has, *unsavoury*.' The man who is perverse is given over by God to follow his own perverseness, till it brings him to destruction. Cp. Lev. xxvi. 23, 24; Rom. i. 28; Rev. xxii. 11; and as an illustration, the history of Balaam (Num. xxii. 20). **28.** *the afflicted people*] The Heb. words for *poor* or *afflicted* and for *humble* are closely connected; and as *afflicted* is here contrasted with *haughty*, it may be understood to mean those who through the discipline of suffering have learnt humility. Comp. Luke vi. 20 with Matt. v. 3. *thine eyes* &c.] R.V. **thine eyes are upon the haughty, that thou mayest bring them down;** or, as marg., *whom thou wilt bring down*.

29—31. God's faithfulness attested by the Psalmist's experience. David goes on to describe how God had made him victorious over all his enemies. **29.** *my lamp*] Illuminating all his life with the light of prosperity, as the lamp illuminates the house. Comp. Ps. xxvii. 1, cxxxii. 17. With the different application of the figure in Ps. xviii. 28, "Thou wilt light my lamp," comp. 1 Kings xi. 36, xv. 4. **30.** Two memorable events in David's life seem to be here alluded to: the successful pursuit of the "troop" of Amalekites which had sacked Ziklag (1 Sam. xxx: in *vv.* 8, 15, 23 the same word *troop* is used of the Amalekites): and the capture of Zion, effected with such ease that he seemed to have leapt over the walls which its defenders trusted were impregnable (ch. v. 6—8).

I have run through] R.V. **I run upon.** The point is the speed of the pursuit, not the completeness of the defeat. *have I leaped*] R.V. **do I leap.** **31.** *tried*] i.e. *refined:* like pure gold, with no taint of earthly dross. Comp. Ps. xii. 6, cxix. 140; Prov. xxx. 5.

He *is* a buckler to all them that trust in him.
For who *is* God, save the LORD?
And who *is* a rock, save our God?
God *is* my strength *and* power:
And he maketh my way perfect.
He maketh my feet like hinds' *feet:*
And setteth me upon my high places.
He teacheth my hands to war;
So that a bow of steel is broken *by* mine arms.
Thou hast also given me the shield of thy salvation:
And thy gentleness hath made me great.
Thou hast enlarged my steps under me;
So that my feet did not slip.
I have pursued mine enemies, and destroyed them;
And turned not again until I had consumed them.
And I have consumed them, and wounded them, that they could not arise:
Yea, they are fallen under my feet.
For thou hast girded me with strength to battle:
Them that rose up against me hast thou subdued under me.

32—37. The praise of Jehovah the giver of victory. **32.** Comp. ch. vii. 22; Deut. xxxii. 31; 1 Sam. ii. 2. *God* in the first line is *El*, the name which describes God as *the Mighty One*. **33.** *my strength* and *power*] R.V. **my strong fortress.** Ps. xviii. 32 reads "who girdeth me with strength:" cp. *v.* 40. *maketh my way perfect*] R.V. **guideth** (marg. *setteth free*) **the perfect in his way.** Another reading is, *guideth my way in perfectness*.

34. *my feet*] Or, as R.V., **his feet.** *like hinds' feet*] The hind was a type of agility, swiftness, and sure-footedness, indispensable qualifications in ancient warfare. Comp. 2 Sam. ii. 18; 1 Chr. xii. 8. *setteth me* &c.] The metaphor of the hind, bounding unimpeded over the mountain tops, is continued. David's high places are the mountain strongholds, the occupation of which secured him in possession of the country. Comp. Deut. xxxii. 13. Hab. iii. 19 is an imitation of this passage. **35.** *so that* &c.] R.V. **so that mine arms do bend a bow of brass.** The ability to bend a *metal* bow (cp. Job xx. 24) was a mark of superior strength. David recognises that physical strength and energy, important qualifications in times when the king was himself the leader of his people in battle, were gifts of God; yet that it was not his own strength that made him victorious, but Jehovah's care and help (*vv.* 36 ff.). **36.** *the shield of thy salvation*] Comp. Eph. vi. 17. Ps. xviii. 35 adds, "and thy right hand hath holden me up." *thy gentleness*] Or *condescension* (R.V. marg.).

37. *enlarged* &c.] Given me free space for unobstructed motion (comp. *v.* 20; Prov. iv. 12), and the power to advance with firm unwavering steps.

38—43. David's destruction of his enemies. **39.** *wounded them* &c.] R.V. **smitten them through, that they cannot**

41 Thou hast also given me the necks of mine enemies,
That I might destroy them that hate me.
42 They looked, but *there was* none to save;
Even unto the LORD, but he answered them not.
43 Then did I beat them *as* small as the dust of the earth,
I did stamp them as the mire of the street, *and* did spread them abroad.
44 Thou also hast delivered me from the strivings of my people,
Thou hast kept me to be head of the heathen:
A people *which* I knew not shall serve me.
45 Strangers shall submit themselves unto me:
As soon as they hear, they shall be obedient unto me.
46 Strangers shall fade away,
And they shall be afraid out of their close places.
47 The LORD liveth; and blessed *be* my rock;
And exalted be the God of the rock of my salvation.
48 *It is* God that avengeth me,

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arise. **41.** R.V. **Thou hast also made mine enemies turn their backs unto me, that I might cut off** &c. The meaning is that his enemies were put to flight (Ex. xxiii. 27), not (as the A.V. suggests) that he planted his foot on their necks in token of triumph (Josh. x. 24). **42.** *They looked*] They looked for help. Cp. Is. xvii. 7, 8. even *unto the* LORD] In their extremity even the heathen might cry for mercy to the "unknown God" of their enemies. Cp. 1 Sam. v. 12; Jonah iii. 7 ff. **43.** *as the dust* &c.] In Ps. xviii. 42, "as the dust before the wind." For the metaphor comp. 2 Kings xiii. 7. *I did stamp them* &c.] In Ps. xviii. 42, "I did cast them out as the mire of the streets:" I flung them away as worthless refuse.

44—46. The Establishment of David's dominion. **44.** He had been brought safely through the civil wars which had disturbed the early years of his reign, and preserved to exercise dominion over the nations round, and he looks forward to fresh victories. Comp. ch. viii. 1—14; Ps. ii. 8. **45.** *shall submit themselves unto me*] The marginal rendering, *yield feigned obedience*, gives the original meaning of the word, which denotes the unwilling homage extorted from the vanquished by their conqueror. Comp. Deut. xxxiii. 29; Ps. lxvi. 3, lxxxi. 15. *as soon as they hear* &c.] At the mere rumour of David's victories they offer their allegiance, as for example Toi king of Hamath did (ch. viii. 9 ff.). **46.** *shall fade away*] Like plants scorched up by the burning sun. Comp. Ex. xviii. 18 (*marg.*). *shall be afraid*] R.V. **shall come trembling;** terrified into surrendering at discretion to the triumphant invader. Comp. Mic. vii. 17; 1 Sam. xiv. 11.

47—51. Concluding Thanksgiving and Doxology. **47.** *The* LORD *liveth*] The experience of David's life was to him a certain proof that God is the living Ruler of the World. Cp. Josh. iii. 10. *the God of the rock of my salvation*] God who is strong and faithful to work out deliverance for me. Comp. *v.* 3. **48.** *avengeth*

And that bringeth down the people under me,
And that bringeth me forth from mine enemies: 49
Thou also hast lifted me up on high above them that rose up against me:
Thou hast delivered me from the violent man.
Therefore I will give thanks unto thee, O LORD, 50
among the heathen,
And I will sing praises unto thy name.
He is the tower of salvation for his king: 51
And sheweth mercy to his anointed,
Unto David, and to his seed for evermore.
Now these *be* the last words of David. 23
David the son of Jesse said,
And the man *who* was raised up on high,

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me] R.V. **executeth vengeance for me;** as for the wrongs inflicted by Saul (1 Sam. xxiv. 12); for the insults of Nabal (1 Sam. xxv. 39); for the opposition of those who refused to acknowledge him as king (ch. iv. 8). Vengeance is the prerogative of God (Ps. xciv. 1), and the visible execution of it was looked for as His vindication of the righteousness and innocence of His servants.

bringeth down the people under me] R.V. **peoples.** The reference seems to be, as in *v.* 44, to his success in overcoming internal opposition to his rule. It is the thanksgiving of a ruler who recognised the importance of union for the prosperity of Israel, and the difficulty of reconciling the discordant elements in the nation, and knew that it was a task beyond his unaided powers. Cp. Ps. cxliv. 2. **49.** *bringeth me forth*] The opposite of "shutting him up into the hand of his enemies" (Ps. xxxi. 8). Cp. *vv.* 20, 37. *thou also* &c.] R.V. **Yea, thou liftest me up above them that rise up against me: thou deliverest me** &c.

the violent man] Men of violence in general, or Saul in particular. Cp. Ps. cxl. 1, 4, 11. **50.** *the heathen*] R.V. **the nations.** Jehovah's praise is to be proclaimed among the nations, who, as they are brought under the dominion of His people, may also be brought to the knowledge of Jehovah. Cp. Ps. xcvi. 3, 10. This verse is quoted by St Paul in Rom. xv. 9 (along with Deut. xxxii. 43; Ps. cxvii. 1; Is. xi. 10), to prove that the O.T. anticipated the admission of the Gentiles to the blessings of salvation.

51. R.V. **Great deliverance giveth he to his king.** Another reading is, *He is a tower of deliverance.* Cp. Ps. lxi. 3; Prov. xviii. 10. *to his seed for[evermore*] A reference to the promise in ch. vii. 12—16, claiming the continued favour of God for his posterity.

XXIII. **1—7.** The last words of David. The great hymn of triumph in ch. xxii. is followed by his "last words:" a parting testimony of his confidence in the fulfilment of the promise to his posterity. **1.** *said*] R.V. **saith**: a peculiar word, generally used of a direct message from God through a prophet in the phrase rendered, "saith the LORD." It marks these "last words" as an utterance delivered by special Divine inspiration. *raised up on high*] Raised by God from a low estate to be the king of Israel.

The anointed of the God of Jacob,
And the sweet psalmist of Israel, said,
2 The Spirit of the LORD spake by me,
And his word *was* in my tongue.
3 The God of Israel said,
The Rock of Israel spake to me,
He that ruleth over men *must be* just,
Ruling *in* the fear of God.
4 And *he shall be* as the light of the morning, *when* the sun riseth,
Even a morning without clouds;
As the tender grass *springing* out of the earth
By clear shining after rain.
5 Although my house *be* not so with God;
Yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant,
Ordered in all *things*, and sure:

Comp. ch. vii. 8, 9; Ps. lxxviii. 70, 71. *the sweet psalmist of Israel*] Lit. *pleasant in the psalms of Israel;* a title deserving to stand by the side of "the anointed of the God of Jacob," because he was God's instrument for educating and developing his people's religious life by means of his psalms, not less than for governing them as king. See Introd., p. 14. **2.** *the Spirit of the* LORD] A direct claim of inspiration, to which Christ Himself bears witness (Matt. xxii. 43). *in my tongue*] R.V. **upon my tongue.**

3, 4. One that ruleth over men righteously,
That ruleth in the fear of God,
He shall be **as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth,**
A morning without clouds,
When **the tender grass** *springeth* **out of the earth,**
Through clear shining after rain. (R.V.).

The second half of *v.* 3 draws an outline portrait of an ideal king, ruling with perfect justice, controlled and guided by the fear of God. *v.* 4 depicts the blessings of his reign. His appearance will be like the life-giving sunshine of a cloudless morning: blessings will follow him, as verdure clothes the earth from the united influences of sunshine and rain. Comp. Is. xxxii. 15, xxxv. 1, 2. This prophecy is the complement of that in ch. vii. There the promise of an eternal dominion is given to the house of David, finding a partial fulfilment in his descendants, and a complete fulfilment only in Christ: here David himself is taught by inspiration to draw the portrait of a ruler, some features of which were partially realised in Solomon and the better kings of Judah, but which finds its perfect realisation only in Christ. **5.** R.V. **Verily my house is not so with God; yet** &c. Although as yet his house falls short of the ideal, the promise is sure. But we may also render as in R.V. marg.,

For is not my house so with God?
for he hath made with me &c.:

For *this is* all my salvation, and all *my* desire,
Although he make *it* not to grow.
But *the sons of* Belial *shall be* all of them as thorns thrust 6
away,
Because they cannot be taken with hands:
But the man *that* shall touch them must be fenced *with* iron 7
and the staff of a spear;
And they shall be utterly burnt with fire in the same place.
These *be* the names of the mighty *men* whom David had: 8
The Tachmonite that sat in the seat, chief among the captains;
the same *was* Adino the Eznite: *he lift up his spear* against

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for all my salvation, and all my *desire,*
will he not make it to grow?

The meaning then will be: Is not my house in such a relation to God, because He has made an eternal covenant with me, that I may look for the righteous ruler to arise out of it, bringing with him all these attendant blessings? "The eternal covenant" is the promise in ch. vii. 12 ff., to which David refers as the ground of his confidence. The epithets "ordered in all things and sure" compare the covenant to a carefully drawn and properly attested legal document. Finally, he expresses his confidence that God will in due time cause this salvation promised to him and his house to grow and prosper, using a metaphor suggested by that in *v.* 4. Comp. Ps. cxxxii. 17; Jer. xxxiii. 15. **6. But the ungodly shall be all of them as thorns to be thrust away, for they cannot be taken with the hand** (R.V.). All ungodly men and evil things are described as *Belial*, **worthlessness** or **wickedness.** Their destruction is the necessary consequence of the perfect rule of the righteous king. Comp. Matt. xiii. 41.

7. But the man that toucheth them must be armed &c. (R.V.). The thorns cannot be touched by hand, but must be torn up with an iron hook fastened to a long handle. The expression is chosen so as to be applicable to the enemies who are figured, as well as to the thorns which figure them. *burnt with fire*] Comp. Matt. iii. 10, xiii. 30; Lk. xix. 27; Heb. vi. 8. *in the same place*] R.V. **in *their* place.**

8—39 [=1 Chr. xi. 11—41]. David's heroes and their exploits. This section is placed in Chronicles after the account of the capture of Zion, and apparently belongs, at any rate in substance, to the earlier part of David's reign.

8—12. The first three. *The Tachmonite that sat in the seat*] R.V. **Josheb-basshebeth a Tahchemonite.** But the text is probably corrupt, and we must follow 1 Chr. xi. 11 in reading **Jashobeam the Hachmonite.** See 1 Chr. xii. 6, xxvii. 2, 32).

the captains] The word probably means **aides-de-camp,** or personal attendants on the king. But it is possible that we should read *chief of the three* (Vulg., A.V. *marg.*). Comp. *v.* 23. *the same* was *Adino the Eznite*] A corruption of some words equivalent to those in 1 Chr. xi. 11, which are needed to complete the sense

9 eight hundred, whom he slew at one time. And after him *was*
Eleazar the son of Dodo the Ahohite, *one* of the three mighty
men with David, when they defied the Philistines *that* were
there gathered together to battle, and the men of Israel were
10 gone away: he arose, and smote the Philistines until his hand
was weary, and his hand clave unto the sword: and the LORD
wrought a great victory that day; and the people returned after
11 him only to spoil. And after him *was* Shammah the son of
Agee the Hararite. And the Philistines were gathered together
into a troop, where was a piece of ground full *of* lentiles: and
12 the people fled from the Philistines. But he stood in the midst
of the ground, and defended it, and slew the Philistines: and
the LORD wrought a great victory.
13 And three of the thirty chief went down, and came to David
in the harvest time unto the cave of Adullam: and the troop of
14 the Philistines pitched in the valley of Rephaim. And David
was then in a hold, and the garrison of the Philistines *was* then
15 *in* Beth-lehem. And David longed, and said, Oh that one would
give me drink *of* the water of the well of Beth-lehem, which *is*

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here: **he lifted up his spear.** *eight hundred*] Chr. reads *three hundred*, perhaps by confusion with *v.* 18. *whom he slew*] R.V. **slain.** With the help perhaps of some of his men. Yet comp. Jud. iii. 31, xv. 15. **9.** *Dodo*] R.V. **Dodai the son of an Ahohite.** Comp. 1 Chr. xxvii. 4. *Ahohite* is a patronymic derived from Ahoah (1 Chron. viii. 4). Perhaps Dodo, like Jashobeam, was one of the Benjamites who joined David at Ziklag (1 Chron. xii. 1, 2). that *were there gathered together*] The text is defective. 1 Chr. xi. 13 reads: He was with David at Pas-dammim, and there the Philistines were gathered together to battle." Pas-dammim, or Ephes-dammim, where David slew Goliath, was in the valley of Elah, between Shochoh and Azekah (1 Sam. xvii. 1). *were gone away*] Rather, as R.V. marg., **went up,** i.e. to battle. *victory*] Heb. *salvation*. Comp. 1 Sam. xi. 13, xix. 5. **11.** *into a troop*] Or, *for foraging* (R.V. marg.). But the consonants may be read with different vowels, **to Lehi** (Jud. xv. 9, 14, 19). *lentiles*] The Philistines came up to carry off the crops. Cp. 1 Sam. xxiii. 1.

13—17. The Water of the Well at Beth-lehem. **13.** *three*] Not the three mentioned before, but in all probability Abishai, Benaiah, and a third not named, who were promoted from the "Thirty" to form a second triad as a reward for this feat of valour. *Adullam*] David's old haunt in the valley of Elah. See note on 1 Sam. xxii. 1. *the valley of Rephaim*] See note on ch. v. 18. The exploit of the three heroes may have occurred in the invasion related in ch. v. 17 ff. **14.** *in a hold*] **in the hold** (R.V.); probably the same as that mentioned in ch. v. 17, where see note. *the garrison*] Comp. 1 Sam. x. 5, xiii. 3, 23, xiv. 1 ff. **15.** The traditional "David's well" is half a mile N.N.E. of Beth-lehem.

by the gate. And the three mighty *men* brake through the host 16
of the Philistines, and drew water out of the well of Beth-lehem,
that *was* by the gate, and took *it*, and brought *it* to David: never-
theless he would not drink thereof, but poured it out unto the
LORD. And he said, Be it far from me, O LORD, that I should 17
do this: *is not this* the blood of the men that went in *jeopardy*
of their lives? therefore he would not drink it. These *things*
did *these* three mighty *men*.

And Abishai, the brother of Joab, the son of Zeruiah, *was* 18
chief among three. And he lift up his spear against three hun-
dred, and slew them, and had the name among three. Was he 19
not most honourable of three? therefore he was their captain:
howbeit he attained not unto the *first* three. And Benaiah the 20
son of Jehoiada, the son of a valiant man, of Kabzeel, who had
done many acts, he slew two lion-like men of Moab: he went
down also and slew a lion in the midst of a pit in time of snow:
and he slew an Egyptian, a goodly man: and the Egyptian had 21
a spear in his hand; but he went down to him with a staff, and
plucked the spear out of the Egyptian's hand, and slew him
with his own spear. These *things* did Benaiah the son of Je- 22
hoiada, and had the name among three mighty *men*. He was 23

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16. A striking proof of the enthusiasm which David inspired in his followers, and a noble instance of the true spirit of chivalry.

poured it out] The sacrificial term for pouring out a drink-offering or libation (Gen. xxxv. 14, &c.). **17.** is not this *the blood*] R.V. *Shall I drink* **the blood**...? The water fetched at the risk of his comrades' lives seemed to him the very blood in which the life resides (Lev. xvii. 10, 11).

18—23. Exploits of Abishai and Benaiah. **18.** *Abishai*] David's valiant but hard-hearted nephew, who shared the command of the army with his brother Joab in the Ammonite war and in Absalom's rebellion (ch. x. 10, 14, xviii. 2). The characteristic trait of his nature was a blunt, impetuous ferocity. See 1 Sam. xxvi. 8; 2 Sam. xvi. 9, xix. 21. *chief among three*] R.V. **chief of the three**, those, namely, who were mentioned in *v.* 17. *the name among three*] R.V. **a name among the three.** **20.** *Benaiah*] Commander of the body-guard (ch. viii. 18, xx. 23), and general of the third division of the army (1 Chr. xxvii. 5, 6). See 1 Kings i. 8, 26, 32 ff., ii. 25—35, 46, iv. 4: and for his father Jehoiada, 1 Chr. xxvii. 5, xii. 27). *Kabzeel*] A town in the extreme south of Judah towards the border of Edom (Josh. xv. 21), reoccupied after the Captivity and called *Jekabzeel* (Neh. xi. 25). *two lion-like men*] R.V. **the two** *sons of* **Ariel.** *a lion* &c.] The lion had probably been driven by the severity of the winter into the neighbourhood of some village, to the terror of the inhabitants. **21.** *a goodly man*] Lit. *a man of appearance*, a notable man; explained in 1 Chr. xi. 23 to mean "a man of great stature." *with a staff*] Comp. (though the word is different) 1 Sam. xvii. 40, 43.

22. R.V. **a name among the three mighty men,** of the

more honourable than the thirty, but he attained not to the *first* three. And David set him over his guard.

24 Asahel the brother of Joab *was* one of the thirty; Elhanan
25 the son of Dodo *of* Beth-lehem, Shammah the Harodite, Elika
26 the Harodite, Helez the Paltite, Ira the son of Ikkesh the
27 Tekoite, Abiezer the Anethothite, Mebunnai the Hushathite,
28, 29 Zalmon the Ahohite, Maharai the Netophathite, Heleb the son of Baanah, a Netophathite, Ittai the son of Ribai out of Gibeah
30 of the children of Benjamin, Benaiah the Pirathonite, Hiddai
31 of the brooks of Gaash, Abi-albon the Arbathite, Azmaveth the

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second rank. **23.** *set him over his guard*] Or, **made him a member of his council.** Comp. 1 Sam. xxii. 14 (R.V.).

24—39. The Thirty Heroes. The names in this list vary considerably from those in the corresponding list in 1 Chron. xi. 26—41. Both lists have suffered from textual corruption, and many of the differences can be traced to this source. But it cannot be assumed as certain that the lists were originally identical. This catalogue may have been revised at a later period of David's reign, when the body was differently constituted. **24.** *Asahel*] David's nephew. See on ch. ii. 18. **25.** *the Harodite*] Of Harod, perhaps the place mentioned in Jud. vii. 1, which may be either *Ain Jâlûd* near Jezreel, or *Ain el Jemmaîn* near Beth-shan. *Elika*] Omitted in Chr., probably by accident, owing to the repetition of *Harodite*. **26.** *the Paltite*] Generally explained to mean *of Beth-pelet*, a town in the extreme south of Judah (Josh. xv. 27). But he is called an *Ephraimite* in 1 Chr. xxvii. 10. 1 Chron. twice reads *Pelonite* (xi. 27, xxvii. 10), the Hebrew word meaning *of so and so*, as though the scribe could not read the word in the text which he was copying. *Ira...the Tekoite*] Of Tekoa, see note on ch. xiv. 2. See 1 Chr. xxvii. 9. He was a different person from David's minister (ch. xx. 26). **27.** *the Anethothite*] Of Anathoth in Benjamin, now *Anâta*, three miles N.N.E. of Jerusalem. Cp. 1 Chr. xxvii. 12. *Mebunnai the Hushathite*] *Mebunnai* is a textual error for *Sibbechai*, for whom see ch. xxi. 18; 1 Chr. xxvii. 11. His native place *Hushah* was in Judah (1 Chr. iv. 4).

28. *Zalmon*] Chron. has *Ilai*. *the Netophathite*] Of Netophah, perhaps the modern *Umm Toba*, three miles N.E. of Bethlehem (1 Chr. ix. 16; Ezra ii. 22; Neh. vii. 26). Maharai commanded the tenth division of the army (1 Chr. xxvii. 13). **29.** *Heleb*] Or *Heled* (1 Chr. xi. 30), or *Heldai* (1 Chr. xxvii. 15). *Ittai*] To be distinguished from Ittai the Gittite. **30.** *Benaiah the Pirathonite*] Of Pirathon in Ephraim (Jud. xii. 13, 15), perhaps the modern *Ferâta*, six miles W.S.W. of Shechem. He was general of the eleventh division (1 Chr. xxvii. 14). *Hiddai*] In 1 Chr. xi. 32 *Hurai*, owing to the common confusion of *d* and *r*. *the brooks of Gaash*] "The hill of Gaash" was on the south of Joshua's property at Timnath-serah in Mount Ephraim (Josh. xix. 50, xxiv. 30; Jud. ii. 9), the traditional site of which is *Kefr Hâris*, nine miles S.W. of Shechem. **31.** *Abi-albon the Arbathite*] In 1 Chr. xi. 32 *Abiel*. He was a native of Arabah or Beth-arabah, a town in

Barhumite, Eliahba the Shaalbonite, *of* the sons of Jashen, 32
Jonathan, Shammah the Hararite, Ahiam the son of Sharar 33
the Hararite, Eliphelet the son of Ahasbai, the son of the 34
Maachathite, Eliam the son of Ahithophel the Gilonite, Hezrai 35
the Carmelite, Paarai the Arbite, Igal the son of Nathan of Zobah, 36
Bani the Gadite, Zelek the Ammonite, Naharai the Beerothite, 37
armourbearer to Joab the son of Zeruiah, Ira an Ithrite, Gareb 38
an Ithrite, Uriah the Hittite: thirty and seven *in* all. 39

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the wilderness of Judah, on the border between Judah and Benjamin (Josh. xv. 6, 61, xviii. 18, 22). *the Barhumite*] Of Bahurim: see note on ch. iii. 16. **32.** *the Shaalbonite*] Of Shaalabbin in the tribe of Dan (Josh. xix. 42; Jud. i. 35; 1 Kings iv. 9); perhaps the modern *Selbit*, about 15 miles W.N.W. of Jerusalem. of *the sons of Jashen, Jonathan, Shammah the Hararite*] *Of* is not in the Heb. text; Chron. has *the sons of Hashem the Gizonite, Jonathan the son of Shage the Hararite*. The text is probably corrupt. **33.** *Shammah the Hararite*] Shammah has already been mentioned in *v.* 11 as one of the first Three. A comparison of 1 Chron. xi. 34 makes it tolerably certain that we should read either *Jonathan the son of Agee the Hararite*, or *Jonathan the son of Shammah the Hararite*, making Jonathan either brother or son of the hero mentioned in *v.* 11. *Sharar*] In Chron. *Sacar*, a name found also in 1 Chr. xxvi. 4. **34.** In 1 Chr. xi. 35, 36 *Eliphal the son of Ur, Hepher the Mecherathite, Ahijah the Pelonite*. *Maachathite*] Of the clan or family of Maachah, settled at Abelbeth-Maachah (ch. xx. 14 ff.); or possibly a native of the Syrian kingdom of Maachah (ch. x. 6). *Eliam*] Son of David's clever but treacherous counsellor (ch. xv. 12); supposed by some to be the father of Bath-sheba. But the identification is doubtful.

35. *Hezrai the Carmelite*] Or as in 1 Chr. xi. 37 **Hezro** (R.V.), of Carmel in Judah, now *Kurmul*, about seven miles S.S.E. of Hebron. Cp. 1 Sam. xxv. 2. *Paarai the Arbite*] Of Arab, a city also near Hebron (Josh. xv. 52), perhaps *er-Rabiyeh*, about five miles S. of Hebron. Chron. has "Naarai the son of Ezbai." **36.** *Igal the son of Nathan of Zobah*] In Chron. *Joel the brother of Nathan*. The letters of *Igal* and *Joel* are very similar in Heb. The name *Igal* occurs in Num. xiii. 7; 1 Chr. iii. 22. If the text is correct he was a Syrian of Zobah. See note on ch. viii. 3. *Bani the Gadite*] *Mibhar the son of Hagri* in 1 Chron. xi. 38 is probably a corruption. **37.** *Zelek the Ammonite*] Like Igal the Syrian, and Ittai the Philistine, a foreigner who rose to distinction in David's service. *Naharai the Beerothite*] Of Beeroth (see on ch. iv. 2), and therefore perhaps a Gibeonite by race. *armourbearer*] R.V., following another reading, **armourbearers,** but the singular is supported by the Sept. and Chron. Joab had ten armourbearers or attendant squires (ch. xviii. 15). **38.** *Ithrite*] Belonging to the family of Jether, which settled at Kirjath-jearim (1 Chr. ii. 53).

39. *Uriah*] See on ch. xi. 3. *thirty and seven in all*] This total is obtained either (*a*) by reckoning *three* in the first class (*vv.* 8—12), *two* in the second (*vv.* 18—23), and *thirty-two* in the third (*vv.*

24 And again the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel,
and he moved David against them to say, Go, number Israel
2 and Judah. For the king said to Joab the captain of the host,
which *was* with him, Go now through all the tribes of Israel,
from Dan even to Beer-sheba, and number ye the people, that
3 I may know the number of the people. And Joab said unto
the king, Now the LORD thy God add unto the people, how

24—39), emending *v.* 34 by the help of Chron. so as to contain three names: or (*b*) if the text of *v.* 34 is retained, by counting *three* in the second class, though only two are mentioned by name. Joab, as commander-in-chief, is not reckoned in the total. In 1 Chr. xi. 41—47 sixteen additional names are given, possibly either of those who became members of the body when its number was not limited to thirty, or of those who took the places vacated by death.

XXIV. [=1 Chr. xxi. 1—27]. The Numbering of the People and the Plague. It is uncertain when the events here recorded took place, but probably in the later years of David's reign. An ordinary census was provided for by the law (Ex. xxx. 12 ff.). It was not then the census itself which was displeasing to God, but the motive which inspired David to take it. Some suppose that he intended to develope the military power of the nation with a view to foreign conquest; others that he meditated the organization of an imperial despotism and the imposition of fresh taxes. But whether this was the case or not, it seems clear that what constituted the sin of the act was the vainglorious spirit which prompted it. The sin was not confined to David: it had infected the nation. It is expressly said that "the anger of Jehovah was kindled *against Israel*." The nation was not punished vicariously for its ruler's sin, but for a sin which was its own, and was only embodied and made visible by its ruler's act. And the punishment struck the very point of their pride, by diminishing the numbers which had been the ground of their self-confident elation.

1—9. The Numbering of the People. **1.** *again*] The previous manifestation of God's anger referred to was the famine (ch. xxi.). *and he moved* &c.] The subject of the verb is Jehovah. The nation had sinned and incurred His anger, and He *moved* David to an act which brought down a sharp punishment on the nation. This does not mean that He *compelled* David to sin, but that in order to test and prove his character He allowed temptation to assault him. Thus while we read that "God himself tempteth no man" (James i. 13), we are taught to pray "Bring us not into temptation" (Matt. vi. 13). In 1 Chr. xxi. 1 we read "Satan stood up against Israel and moved David to number Israel." The older record speaks only of God's permissive action; the later tells us of the malicious instrumentality of Satan. The case is like that of Job (Job i. 12, ii. 10). **2.** R.V. **And the king said**: yielding to the temptation to which he was subjected by permission of God through the instrumentality of Satan. *number ye*] It is stated in 1 Chron. xxi. 2 that the commission was given to "Joab and to the princes of the people." Comp. *v.* 4. **3.** *the* LORD...

many soever they be, an hundredfold, and *that* the eyes of my lord the king may see *it:* but why doth my lord the king delight in this thing? Notwithstanding the king's word pre- 4
vailed against Joab, and against the captains of the host. And Joab and the captains of the host went out from the presence of the king, to number the people *of* Israel. And they passed 5
over Jordan, and pitched in Aroer, *on* the right side of the city that *lieth* in the midst of the river of Gad, and toward Jazer: then they came to Gilead, and to the land of Tahtim-hodshi; 6
and they came to Dan-jaan, and about to Zidon, and came *to* 7
the strong hold of Tyre, and *to* all the cities of the Hivites, and of the Canaanites: and they went out to the south of Judah, *even to* Beer-sheba. So when they had gone through all the 8
land, they came *to* Jerusalem at the end of nine months and

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add &c.] Comp. Deut. i. 11. *and that* &c.] R.V. **and may** &c. That is, may it happen in the king's lifetime. **4.** *against Joab* &c.] A council of the officers of the army was held, in which the scheme was discussed. **5.** *Aroer* &c.] Either Aroer near Rabbah in the tribe of Gad (Josh. xiii. 25): or, more probably, Aroer on the Arnon. We must then render, with R.V. marg., *toward Gad.* *on the right side*] On the south, for the Hebrews reckoned the points of the compass facing the east. *the city* &c.] R.V. **the city that is in the middle of the valley of Gad** (or, marg., *toward Gad*). *toward Jazer*] R.V. **unto Jazer,** probably *es Szîr*, 7 miles W.S.W. of *Ammân* (Rabbah) and 9 miles N. of Heshbon. See Num. xxi. 32, xxxii. 35; Josh. xiii. 25, xxi. 39; Is. xvi. 8, 9. **6.** *Gilead*] The mountainous district partly to the north and partly to the south of the river Jabbok.

the land of Tahtim-hodshi] Some district, apparently east of the Jordan and north of Gilead, is meant, but no such district is known, and the form of the words also makes it probable that the text is corrupt. Possibly we should read (with some MSS. of the Sept.) *to the land of the Hittites to Kedesh*, the famous Hittite capital on the Orontes. *Dan-jaan*] Perhaps on the coast of Asher. *Zidon*] The extreme north-western limit of the kingdom, on the border of Asher (Josh. xix. 28), but never occupied by that tribe (Jud. i. 31). **7.** *the strong hold of Tyre*] Or, *fenced city of Tyre*, as in Josh. xix. 29, where Tyre is named among the places on the border of Asher. Like Zidon it was never occupied by the Israelites, and we must suppose either that the region traversed by the enumerators is defined as reaching up to though not including Tyre and Zidon, or that these cities were visited in order to take a census of Israelites resident in them. *the cities of the Hivites* &c.] The old inhabitants were never exterminated from the northern part of Palestine, but made tributary. The district round Kedesh-Naphtali in particular was called *the region of the nations* or *Galilee of the Gentiles* (Josh. xx. 7; 1 Kings ix. 11; Is. ix. 1).

8. Joab however omitted the Levites (Num. i. 47 ff.), who were exempt from military service; and the Benjamites (1 Chr. xxi. 6).

9 twenty days. And Joab gave *up* the sum of the number of the
people unto the king: and there were in Israel eight hundred
thousand valiant men that drew the sword; and the men of
Judah *were* five hundred thousand men.
10 And David's heart smote him after that he had numbered
the people. And David said unto the LORD, I have sinned
greatly *in* that I have done: and now, I beseech thee, O LORD,
take away the iniquity of thy servant; for I have done very
11 foolishly. For when David was up in the morning, the word
of the LORD came unto the prophet Gad, David's seer, saying,
12 Go and say unto David, Thus saith the LORD, I offer thee three
things; choose thee one of them, that I may do *it* unto thee.
13 So Gad came to David, and told him, and said unto him, Shall
seven years of famine come unto thee in thy land? or wilt thou
flee three months before thine enemies, while they pursue thee?
or that there be three days' pestilence in thy land? now advise,
14 and see what answer I shall return *to* him that sent me. And
David said unto Gad, I am in a great strait: let us fall now into
the hand of the LORD; for his mercies *are* great: and let me
not fall into the hand of man.
15 So the LORD sent a pestilence upon Israel from the morning
even to the time appointed: and there died of the people from

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9. *the number*] R.V. **the numbering.** In 1 Chr. xxi. 5 the numbers are given as 1,100,000 for Israel, and 470,000 for Judah. This discrepancy may be due to textual corruption, or to a difference in the original estimates, or in the tradition with respect to them, since the result of the census was not registered in the state records (1 Chr. xxvii. 24).

10—14. The Choice of Punishments. **10.** *David's heart smote him*] Conscience accused him, and he recognised the sinfulness of the vainglorious spirit of self-confidence which had induced him to take the census. *I have done very foolishly*] Comp. 1 Sam. xiii. 13; 2 Chr. xvi. 9. In both these cases, as in effect here, the folly was sin springing from distrust of God. **11.** R.V. **And when David rose up** &c.; after he had recognised and confessed his sin, and prayed for pardon. *Gad*] Gad has not been mentioned since he was with David in his wanderings (1 Sam. xxii. 5), but no doubt had been acting as his counsellor throughout. **13.** *seven years*] The reading of the Sept. and Chron. is **three years,** and this seems to be required by the symmetry of the statement. Famine, war, and pestilence are three of Jehovah's four sore judgments (Ezek. xiv. 21). Two of them David had already experienced. *advise* &c.] R.V. **advise thee and consider.** Lit. *know and see.* **14.** *his mercies are great*] Or, *many* (R.V. marg.). Comp. Ps. li. 1. In the pestilence—some form of plague sudden and mysterious in its attack, and baffling the medical knowledge of the time—the punishment would come directly from God, and depend immediately upon His Will.

15—17. The Plague. **15.** *even to the time appointed*] This

Dan even to Beer-sheba seventy thousand men. And when the 16
angel stretched out his hand *upon* Jerusalem to destroy it, the
LORD repented him of the evil, and said to the angel that de-
stroyed the people, *It is* enough: stay now thine hand. And
the angel of the LORD was by the threshingplace of Araunah the
Jebusite. And David spake unto the LORD when he saw the angel 17
that smote the people, and said, Lo, I have sinned, and I have
done wickedly: but these sheep, what have they done? let thine
hand, I pray thee, be against me, and against my father's house.
And Gad came that day to David, and said unto him, Go up, 18
rear an altar unto the LORD in the threshingfloor of Araunah
the Jebusite. And David, according to the saying of Gad, went 19
up as the LORD commanded. And Araunah looked, and saw 20
the king and his servants coming on toward him: and Araunah

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would naturally mean until the end of the third day; but the duration of the plague seems to have been mercifully shortened (*v.* 16): so perhaps it may mean a time determined in the counsel of God, before the expiration of the period originally named. Another rendering is, *until the time of assembly*, i.e. the hour for offering the evening sacrifice, about three o'clock in the afternoon. **16.** *the angel*] Angels are God's ministers in temporal judgments now, as they will be in the final judgment hereafter. Cp. Ex. xii. 23; Ps. lxxviii. 49; 2 Kings xix. 35; Acts xii. 23; Matt. xiii. 41. *repented him of the evil*] Comp. Ex. xxxii. 14; Jer. xxvi. 13, 19; Jon. iii. 10. On the one hand Scripture teaches us that "God is not a man that he should repent" (Num. xxiii. 19; 1 Sam. xv. 29); on the other hand it does not shrink from saying that God repents (*a*) when, as here, upon man's penitence He withdraws or mitigates a punishment: (*b*) when, upon man's faithlessness or disobedience, He cancels a promise or revokes a blessing which He had given. God's repentance does not mean that He *regrets* His action. Scripture boldly states the two apparently contradictory truths, and leaves conscience to harmonize them. See notes on 1 Sam. xv. 11, 29.

the threshing-place] R.V. **the threshingfloor:** it is the same word as in *vv.* 18, 21, 24. Araunah's threshingfloor was on Mount Moriah, the hill to the E. of Jerusalem, and was the site upon which the Temple was afterwards built (2 Chr. iii. 1), It was identified by Jewish tradition with the mountain in the land of Moriah which was the scene of the sacrifice of Isaac (Gen. xxii. 2 ff.), but the identification has been questioned. *Araunah*] Or, *Ornah;* in 1 Chr. xxi. 15 Ornan. **17.** *I have sinned* &c.] **It is I that have sinned and I that have done perversely.** David takes the blame upon himself, for it is characteristic of true penitence to dwell on its own sin, without respect to the complicity of others. But it is clear from *v.* 1 that the sin was the sin of the people as well as of David.

18—25. Purchase of Araunah's threshingfloor and erection of an altar there. **18.** Gad's message was the answer to David's prayer, the announcement to him of the purpose of mercy described in *v.* 16. **20.** *saw the king*] In Chron. *saw the angel*, but the

went out, and bowed himself before the king *on* his face upon
21 the ground. And Araunah said, Wherefore is my lord the king come to his servant? And David said, To buy the threshing-floor of thee, to build an altar unto the LORD, that the plague
22 may be stayed from the people. And Araunah said unto David, Let my lord the king take and offer up what seemeth good unto him: behold, *here be* oxen for burnt sacrifice, and threshing in-
23 struments and *other* instruments of the oxen for wood. All *these things* did Araunah, *as* a king, give unto the king. And Araunah said unto the king, The LORD thy God accept thee.
24 And the king said unto Araunah, Nay; but I will surely buy *it* of thee at a price: neither will I offer burnt offerings unto the LORD my God of that which doth cost me nothing. So David bought the threshingfloor and the oxen for fifty shekels of
25 silver. And David built there an altar unto the LORD, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings. So the LORD was intreated for the land, and the plague was stayed from Israel.

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words *angel* and *king* in Heb. are very similar, and probably *king* is the true reading there also. *went out*] From the threshing-floor where he was at work threshing wheat. **22.** *threshing instruments*] i.e. the threshing sledges, drawn by the oxen which Araunah offers for sacrifice. Corn was either trampled out by oxen (Deut. xxv. 4), or beaten out by these machines. other *instruments of the oxen*] R.V. **the furniture of the oxen**; the wooden yokes &c. Comp. 1 Kings xix. 21; 1 Sam. vi. 14. **23.** R.V. **All this, O king, doth Araunah give unto the king.** The words are a continuation of Araunah's speech in *v.* 22. Comp. 1 Chr. xxi. 23. The rendering, *all this did Araunah the king give unto the king*, is grammatically possible; but it is improbable that so important a fact as that Araunah was the former king of Jebus should be only mentioned incidentally. *accept thee*] The same word is used of God's acceptance of prayer and sacrifice in Job xxxiii. 26 (A.V. *be favourable*); Ezek. xx. 40, 41, xliii. 27, &c. **24. neither will I offer burnt offerings...which cost me nothing** (R.V.). For that would contradict the essential idea of sacrifice. Comp. Mal. i. 13, 14. *David bought the threshingfloor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver*] The corresponding statement in 1 Chr. xxi. 25 is that "David gave to Ornan for the place six hundred shekels of gold by weight." If this refers to the same purchase, we can only suppose that the numbers in one or both of the passages are corrupt: but it is possible that the purchase of the threshingfloor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver was a distinct transaction from the subsequent purchase of "the place," that is, the whole area upon which the Temple was erected, for six hundred shekels of gold. **25.** David afterwards chose the spot for the site of the Temple. See 1 Chr. xxii. 1; 2 Chr. iii. 1. *was intreated*] See note on ch. xxi. 14.

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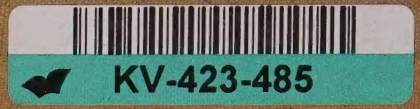
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